

South Downs National Park Authority

Corporate Plan 2014-17

Version 1.0

Review Date	March 2015
Responsibility	Director of Corporate Services
Last updated	March 2014
Date approved	25 March 2014
Approved by	SDNPA

DOCUMENT AMENDMENT HISTORY

Version No.	Originator of change	Date of change	Change Description
1.0	Anne Rehill	09/04/2014	Approved final version
1.01	Rebecca Saunders	29/05/2014	Final design and proof of document

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Foreword from Margaret Paren and Trevor Beattie

A great deal has been achieved in the twelve months since the SDNPA's last Corporate Plan. Our entire governance framework has been reviewed and updated, a new delivery focused staff structure has been introduced and a two year settlement has been confirmed by Defra. Most important of all, our first Partnership Management Plan (PMP) was published in December and our Local Plan Options Consultation was launched on 28 February.

This rapid progress means that the stable long term framework for the delivery of the SDNPA's vision is now in place. This is therefore the first Corporate Plan able to look beyond the pressing demands of setting up the nation's newest National Park to focus on the achievement of our broader strategic objectives.

This three year Corporate Plan is the first to be structured around the ambitious outcomes and policies in the Partnership Management Plan which are achieved through its delivery framework. More than £10 million of additional investment has been attracted to the National Park to date through joint initiatives led by the SDNPA and this Plan explains how we will attract much more over the next three years. It sets out a range of performance measures which link our vision for 2050 with the daily work of our staff and partners.

Whether you live in or near the South Downs National Park, are a business, one of our partners, a visitor, or simply someone who cares about the future of the South Downs, we hope you find this plan evidence of our commitment, confirmation of our achievements and proof of the huge potential of the partnerships that epitomise the SDNPA.

Executive Summary

This Corporate Plan sets out our objectives and priorities for the next three years, along with the resources we will use to deliver them and measures of success.

The primary purpose of the South Downs National Park Authority Corporate Plan is to set out how we will deliver those elements of the South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan for which we have led responsibility, and also deliver a Local Plan. It has been developed to closely align with the priorities and outcomes of the Partnership Management Plan (PMP). The first section sets out the context for our plan and shows how our plan links from government legislation through to the individual objectives for each member of staff.

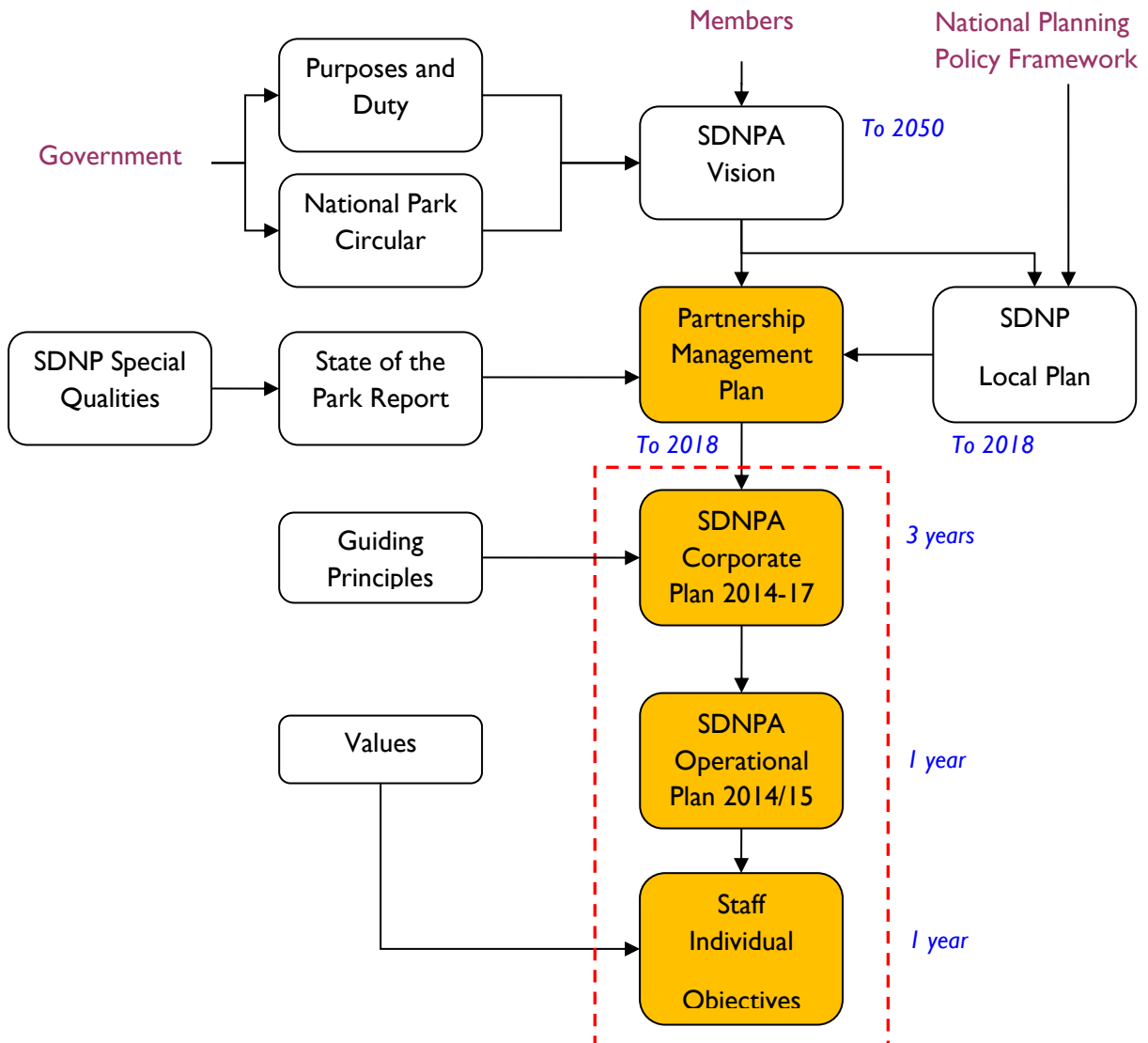
The second section sets out our objectives for the next three years, and includes timescales, targets and deliverables for our projects and programmes. Many of the delivery mechanisms will require a joint effort by two or more organisations to achieve the targets we have set ourselves in accordance with the PMP delivery framework. Progress towards demonstrating that we have delivered the success measures will be monitored quarterly, where possible, by the South Downs National Park Authority. We have also shown the allocation of resources against each of our objectives for the next three years.

Creating and sustaining an organisation that operates efficiently and effectively is a major objective of the National Park Authority. We have put in place a revised organisational structure to enable this which unites our statutory purposes with the PMP outcomes. There are a number of objectives which support us in being an efficient and effective organisation.

Our annual Operational Plan sets out in more detail how we will deliver each objective in our corporate plan during 2014/15. The Operational Plan links directly to the personal objectives for every member of staff.

Setting the Scene

The South Downs National Park as a whole is governed by a framework of legislation and strategic plans as shown below.



Each element of this framework is described in more detail below.

The primary purpose of the South Downs National Park Authority Corporate Plan is to set out how we will deliver those elements of the South Downs National Park PMP for which we are responsible. All of the documents highlighted in yellow above are rooted in the Statutory Purposes and Duty and this is the golden thread that unifies them. The eleven outcomes in the PMP form the basis for the measures in this Corporate Plan and the detailed plans that sit below it. This means that any project or programme included in the delivery framework in the PMP can be linked to our statutory purposes and duty. Similarly, the individual objectives of staff and even their job roles can be clearly linked back to them.

Purposes and Duty

Our role is clearly defined by Parliament in our statutory Purposes and Duty, which are:



The National Park Authority is the Local Planning Authority for the National Park.

National Park Circular

The English National Parks and Broads UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 published by Defra guides the work of all National Parks. This sets out the vision that by 2030 English National Parks and the Broads will be places where:

- There are thriving, living, working landscapes notable for their natural beauty and cultural heritage. They inspire visitors and local communities to live within environmental limits and to tackle climate change. The wide range of services they provide (from clean water to sustainable food) are in good condition and valued by society.
- Sustainable development can be seen in action. The communities of the National Parks take an active part in decisions about their future. They are known for having been pivotal in the transformation to a low carbon society and sustainable living. Renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, low carbon transport and travel, and healthy, prosperous communities have long been the norm.
- Wildlife flourishes and habitats are maintained, restored and expanded and linked effectively to other ecological networks. Woodland cover has increased and all

woodlands are sustainably managed, with the right trees in the right places. Landscapes and habitats are managed to create resilience and enable adaptation.

- Everyone can discover the rich variety of England's natural and historic environment, and have the chance to value them as places for escape, adventure, enjoyment, inspiration and reflection, and a source of national pride and identity. They will be recognised as fundamental to our prosperity and well-being.

Taken together with the statutory Purposes and Duty, these set out the highest level vision and objectives for all National Parks.

South Downs National Park Vision

The PMP, launched in January 2014, is the overarching strategic document for the South Downs National Park. It was developed with input from a wide range of stakeholders. It informs not only our Corporate Plan but also those of our partners.

By 2050, in the South Downs National Park:

- the iconic English lowland landscapes and heritage will have been conserved and greatly enhanced. These inspirational and distinctive places, where people live, work, farm and relax, are adapting well to the impacts of climate change and other pressures;
- people will understand, value, and look after the vital natural services that the National Park provides. Large areas of high-quality and well-managed habitat will form a network supporting wildlife throughout the landscape;
- opportunities will exist for everyone to discover, enjoy, understand and value the National Park and its special qualities. The relationship between people and landscape will enhance their lives and inspire them to become actively involved in caring for it and using its resources more responsibly;
- its special qualities will underpin the economic and social well-being of the communities in and around it, which will be more self-sustaining and empowered to shape their own future. Its villages and market towns will be thriving centres for residents, visitors and businesses and supporting the wider rural community;
- successful farming, forestry, tourism and other business activities within the National Park will actively contribute to, and derive economic benefit from, its unique identity and special qualities.

The South Downs National Park Authority is one of many organisations working to achieve the 50 year vision for the South Downs National Park.

South Downs National Park Special Qualities

The South Downs National Park is shaped by people and located close to people. It has many special qualities and, together these define the sense of place that attracts people to live, work and play in the area. These special qualities need to be understood, appreciated, conserved and enhanced. The special qualities underpin the PMP. Information about them is available in the State of the National Park Report, published in 2012. Our aim is to enhance and, where possible, enhance those qualities.

1	Diverse, inspirational landscapes and breathtaking views		4	An environment shaped by centuries of farming and embracing new enterprise	
2	A rich variety of wildlife and habitats including rare and internationally important species		5	Great opportunities for recreational activities and learning experiences	
3	Tranquil and unspoilt places		6	Well-conserved historical features and a rich cultural heritage	
			7	Distinctive towns and villages, and communities with real pride in their area	

State of the Park Report

The South Downs National Park is a diverse and complex area:

- there are 18 different major landscape types and 18 distinctive landscape types. 112,000 people live within the boundaries of the National Park with another 1.97 million living within 5km of it;
- the National Park has a complex administrative environment, with 15 local Authorities and 183 parishes;
- within the National Park, landownership is diverse with five major estates and significant landholdings by organisations such as the National Trust and the Forestry Commission to name but a few;
- the economy of the area is highly varied including agriculture, forestry, small-medium local enterprises and high tech industries.

The above list illustrates that variety. The State of the South Downs National Park report sets out to capture a picture of the National Park as it is today, providing a baseline against which future changes can be measured.

One of many unique features of the South Downs National Park is that the special qualities of the landscape sit at the heart of one of the most prosperous parts of the UK. The South East accounts for nearly 15% of the UK's Gross Value Added (GVA) and the economy of the

National Park itself is worth some £2.23 billion. The National Park provides the water supply, the recreational opportunities, the breathing space and the carbon sink for a vital part of the UK economy. It is the green infrastructure on which national prosperity depends.

The report is important not just for the National Park Authority, but for everyone who cares about the future of this iconic and unique living and working place.

South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan (PMP)

The South Downs National Park PMP is the strategic plan for all those with a responsibility to look after this precious and treasured landscape. The plan will be reviewed by all those who contribute to it every five years.

The purpose of the PMP is to outline long term plans for the:

- protection, conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the National Park, including its biodiversity and cultural heritage;
- promotion of opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the area's special qualities; and,
- encouragement of sustainable forms of economic and community development as defined by our Duty as a National Park.

In delivering these aims, the South Downs National Park seeks to become a beacon for sustainability, innovation and best practice – an exemplar of what is possible – in one of the most pressured regions in the world. The PMP sets out a shared vision and agreed outcomes for the South Downs until 2050. It sets out a range of policies which provide a steer for all those delivering the objectives. The delivery framework captures the key activities of the partners who made the plan. Progress towards the outcomes will be monitored regularly.

The SDNPA is one of a number of organisations who need to ensure that their specific contributions to the PMP are reflected in the way they set future priorities.

Our Corporate Plan has been developed to closely align with the priorities and outcomes of the PMP. We will keep it under annual review to ensure it continues to closely align with the PMP.

South Downs National Park Local Plan

The South Downs National Park has by far the highest population of all UK National Parks, approximately 112,000. There is also a substantial population within very close proximity of the National Park's boundary in towns such as Eastbourne, Brighton, Worthing, Chichester, Havant, Winchester, Bordon, Haslemere and Burgess Hill. Larger urban areas such as Southampton, Portsmouth, Crawley and London are further afield but are all sufficiently close to make the National Park accessible for a day's visit by well over 10 million people.

The Local Plan will translate the vision and objectives for the National Park into key development policies which will in turn determine, in principle, the acceptability or otherwise of planning applications for development proposals within the South Downs National Park.

This will be the first Local Plan produced for the whole of the South Downs National Park, following the National Park's designation. The plan will link closely to the PMP and include a spatial strategy for the South Downs National Park, core policies and development management policies.

We have started to develop options for the South Downs National Park Local Plan and will be consulting on them in March and April this year. This is the first formal consultation stage in the development of the Local Plan and seeks views on key issues at a strategic level. Following this we will develop and consult on preferred options for consultation early in 2015 before developing a pre-submission plan in 2015. Following consultation on and revisions to this, we aim to submit our Local Plan for Examination by an Inspector in 2016. Adoption is scheduled for 2017.

South Downs National Park Authority Corporate and Operational Plans

This Corporate Plan presents the overarching objectives for the National Park Authority for the three year period from 2014-15 to 2016-17. This plan highlights the South Downs National Park Authority contribution to the delivery of the PMP objectives and the projects set out in the delivery framework, for the three year period to 2017. The plan is one of our key management tools to ensure delivery of our Purposes and Duty and, with the PMP, and the Operational Plan, is an integral part of our suite of plans that allow the 'golden thread' of strategy through to action to be clearly shown.

The associated, one-year Operational Plan, presents a more detailed view of the objectives and actions that the Authority will be undertaking in the 2014-15 year to work toward achieving the three year outcomes as presented in the Corporate Plan.

Guiding Principles and Values

Our Corporate Plan focuses specifically on the work of the South Downs National Park Authority. In undertaking our work, and seeking to meet our Purposes and Duty, we are guided by a number of key principles and values. These form the basis of our relationships with partners and our role with communities within, and users of, the National Park.

Our Values underpin how we wish to work with each other:

- Working for the National Park we will:
 - have a common goal determined by the National Park's Purposes and the Duty
 - champion the National Park's aspirations
 - communicate clearly and listen well
 - be flexible, encourage innovation and welcome challenge

- Working together we will:
 - trust and gain mutual benefits
- To deliver results we will:
 - ensure our approach and decisions are informed by evidence
 - be positive and enthusiastic: take the initiative
 - be seen to add value in all that we do.

We are a small organisation and seek to add value by working in partnership with other bodies, aligning objectives at the highest level to ensure shared delivery for the National Park.

Individual staff objectives

It is essential that all our staff understand the role they play in helping to achieve the aims and objectives of the National Park Authority. A vital part of our 'golden thread' is to ensure that all staff have clearly defined objectives giving them clarity on their role and linking to the Operational and Corporate Plans. Staff are recognised for achievement of objectives and competencies through a performance related pay scheme that seeks to drive the delivery of the corporate objectives and further rewards staff for superior performance. In this way, staff are able to see how their contribution feeds into the overarching achievements of the National Park Authority and the higher level Purposes and Duty.

Overarching Objectives

A set of high level outcomes have been agreed for the 50 year vision for the National Park as part of the PMP. These outcomes provide the basis for our short term priorities for 2014-17. We, the National Park Authority, will:

- 1 A thriving living landscape - support the development of the South Downs National Park as a special, thriving living and working landscape.**
- 2 People connected to places - provide opportunities for people within and outside the South Downs National Park to connect to its unique and special places.**
- 3 Towards a sustainable future - encourage sustainable actions by businesses, communities and individuals across the National Park, and manage our own corporate impact.**
- 4 An efficient and effective organisation that supports Partnership working – manage our own resources to deliver high levels of customer service and working to improve the capacity of our partners to deliver shared outcomes.**

Key delivery mechanisms

We have developed detailed delivery plans for our projects and programmes which set out timescales, targets and deliverables. Some larger projects such as the South Downs Way Ahead, Nature Improvement Area and the Local Sustainable Transport Fund have their own set of performance measures and frameworks for evaluation.

We monitor our corporate improvement plan using information from a range of sources including our staff surveys, our recent peer review, our internal audit programme and learning from customer feedback to support continuous improvement. This is managed as part of our performance management and reporting framework.

How we will monitor progress against these objectives

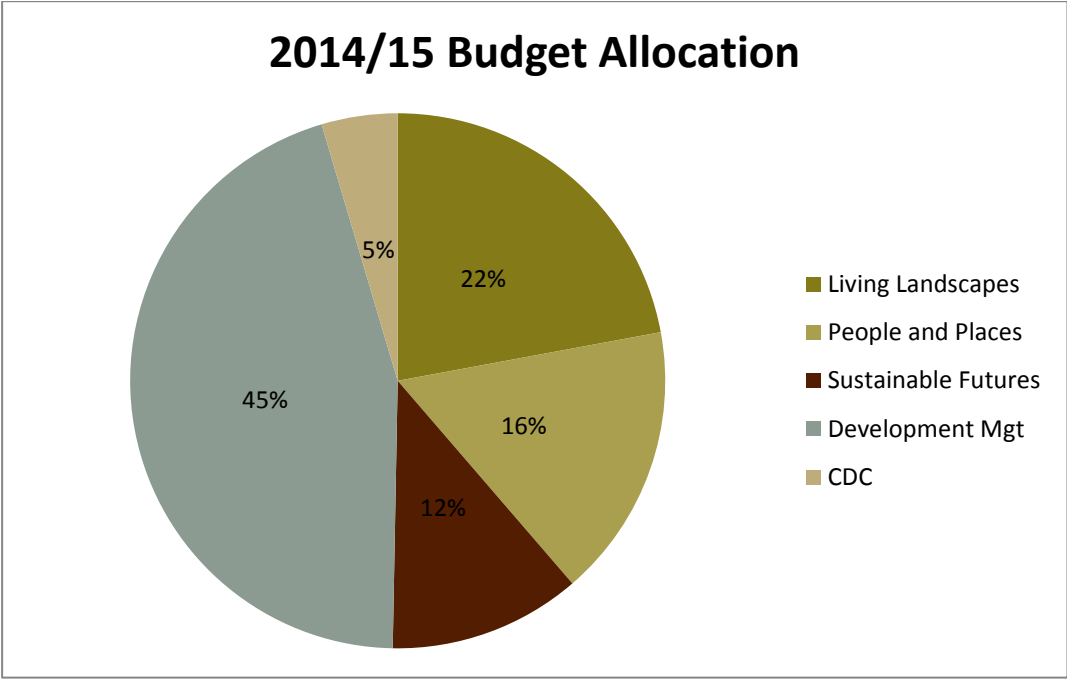
Many of the outcomes we are seeking to achieve for the National Park are, by their nature, long term and require significant partnership involvement. We are committed to working with our partners to deliver these outcomes and recognise that it is only through the success of these partnerships that many of the objectives will be achieved. They are described in some detail in the Delivery Framework which forms Appendix I of the PMP.

Progress towards demonstrating that we have delivered the success measures will be monitored by the South Downs National Park Authority quarterly where possible and at

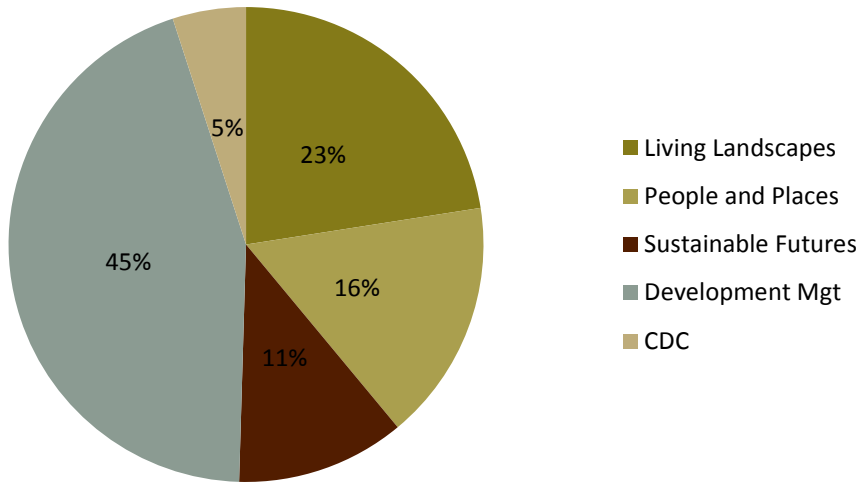
least annually. This will be via reports to the Governance Committee, which are published on our website. In addition to reporting to Committee, we will use our Aspireview performance management system to capture our own performance. We will make the system available to partners to assist them to monitor progress towards achieving PMP outcomes.

How we allocate resources to deliver our objectives

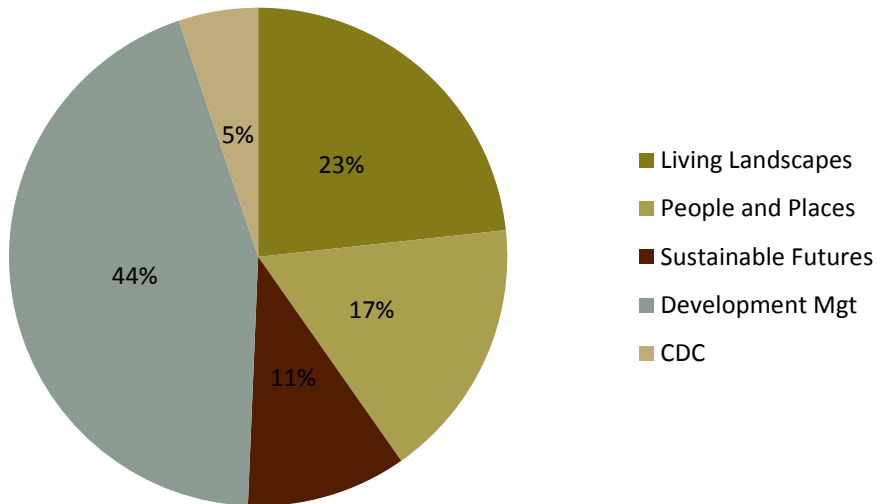
The following pie charts show the budget that is attributed to direct delivery of the overarching objectives, the statutory duties in terms of planning and the management and democratic core of the Authority. Indirect support necessary to the delivery of those objectives and duties are allocated across those functions. Indirect support comes from the Strategic Management Team, Human Resources and the management and delivery of services organised externally through the major corporate contracts covering Financial Services, Legal Services, ICT and Monitoring Officer.



2015/16 Budget Allocation



2016/17 Budget Allocation



Objective 1: A thriving, living landscape

We will work with a range of major projects and partnerships to deliver key outcomes which conserve and enhance the landscape, biodiversity and heritage assets in the South Downs National Park. We will also manage the impacts of large-scale and cumulative small-scale developments.

Partnership Management Plan Outcomes	Budget 2014-15	Budget 2015-16	Budget 2016-17
Budget	£2,208k	£2207k	£2,247k
PMP1	The landscape character of the South Downs, its special qualities and local distinctiveness have been conserved and enhanced by effectively managing the land and the negative impacts of development and cumulative change.		
PMP2	There is increased capacity within the landscape for its natural resources, habitats and species to adapt to the impacts of climate change and other pressures.		
PMP3	A well managed and better connected network of habitats and increased population and distribution of priority species now exist in the National Park.		
PMP4	The condition and status of cultural heritage assets and their settings (including monuments, buildings, towns and buried remains) is significantly enhanced, many more have been discovered and they contribute positively to local distinctiveness and sense of place.		
SDNPA Delivery Mechanisms			
Single local Plan, Development Management decisions, Design Panel, Neighbourhood planning, Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans, Volunteers, Development of joint core strategies for minerals and waste with East Sussex County Council, Hampshire County Council and West Sussex County Council, Buildings at Risk programme.			
Projects and Partnerships			
Heathlands Reunited, South Downs Way Ahead, Farmland Birds Initiative, Sustainable Woodland Management, Secrets of the High Woods, Dark Night Skies, Undergrounding electricity lines programme, Highways Design and Signage Partnership, Landscape Mapping and Targeting toolkit, Ecosystems approach, Meon Valley Partnership, Chalk Springs and Stream Initiative, Safeguarding Places of Worship Initiative, Heritage Coast Partnership			

Objective 1: Measures of SDNPA success	3 year Target/milestone		
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Heritage Coast Partnership and plan adopted and being implemented by partners	Develop Heritage Coast Partnership and plan		
% of SDNPA-led projects completed on time or on track for year three milestones	90	90	90
% of SDNPA-led projects completed to or under original budget	90	90	90
% of desired outcomes achieved for projects completed in the period	100	100	100
Prepare for the submission of the SDNPA Local Plan in accordance with the timetable and procedures set out in the agreed Local Development Scheme (LDS)	Agree preferred options by December 2014	Develop pre-submission draft by end of September 2015	Submit proposed Local Plan June 2016
Improved quality of information supporting planning applications received by SDNPA as a result of pre-app advice	Qualitative report annually	Qualitative report annually	Qualitative report annually
Improved quality of information supporting planning applications received by SDNPA as a result of being considered by Design Review Panel	Qualitative report annually	Qualitative report annually	Qualitative report annually
% of planning application appeals determined in favour of SDNPA	80	80	80
Number of partners actively engaged in delivering projects against purpose 1 in the Delivery Framework of the PMP	Increase	Increase	Increase
Number of Conservation Area Management Plans formally adopted	16 (total 38)	11 (total 49)	11 (total 60)
Agreed approach to payments for payment for ecosystems services (PES)	PES pilot proposals and approach agreed with partners	Field test approaches and establish governance/ funding arrangements	Pilots completed and a way forward agreed with Partnerships

Objective 2: People connected with places

We will promote opportunities for awareness, learning and engagement, seek to ensure quality access management and accessibility and support the development of sustainable tourism.

Partnership Management Plan Outcomes	Budget 2014-15	Budget 2015-16	Budget 2016-17
Budget	£1,658k	£1,610k	£1,637k
PMP5	Outstanding visitor experiences are underpinned by a high quality access and sustainable transport network, supporting improved health and wellbeing.		
PMP6	Widespread understanding of the special qualities of the National Park and the benefits it provides.		
PMP7	The range and diversity of traditional culture and skills has been protected and there is an increase in contemporary arts and crafts that are inspired by the Special Qualities of the National Park.		
PMP8	More responsibility and action is taken by visitors, residents and businesses to conserve and enhance the special qualities and use resources more wisely.		
SDNPA Delivery Mechanisms			
Brand and Identity work, Learning Partnership, Behaviour Change Campaign, South Downs Centre Interpretation, Maintenance of South Downs Way, Rights of Way, Cycling Infrastructure Improvements, Cycle Maps, Food and Drink Trail, Sense of Place Toolkit, South Downs National Park Learning Zone, Community Planning Toolkit, Neighbourhood Planning, Adopting or Endorsing Community Led Plans, Increasing Volunteering Roles and Opportunities and Diversifying the Volunteer Base			
Projects and Partnerships			
LST – modal shift projects, Cycling in National Parks, Birling Gap Interpretation, Alice Holt Interpretation, Our Lands, Rother Valley Schools, Health and Wellbeing partnership, Sompriti Project. Access for All – Miles without Stiles, South Downs Sustainable Tourism Network, Welcome to the South Downs training, Discover another Way, Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative.			

Objective 2: Measures of SDNPA success	3 year Target/milestone		
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
% of schools within a 5km radius of the boundary using the National Park for Learning Outside the Classroom experiences at least once a year	Set baseline	Increase	Increase
Total number of volunteer days undertaken by the South Downs Volunteer Ranger service	Increase	Increase	Increase
Percentage of visitors and residents using more sustainable modes of transport - walking, cycling and public transport - within the National Park	Increase	Increase	Increase
% of SDNPA-led projects completed on time or on track for year three milestones	90	90	90
% of SDNPA-led projects completed to or under original budget	90	90	90
% of desired outcomes achieved for projects completed in the period	100	100	100
% of visitors/residents recognising and responding to identity key themes and visuals.	Set baseline	(too soon to measure)	Increase by 10%
Number of local tourism businesses promoting the National Park and encouraging visitors to visit multiple venues	Increase	Increase	Increase
Number of partners actively engaged in delivering projects against purpose 2 in the Delivery Framework of the PMP	Increase	Increase	Increase

Objective 3: Towards a sustainable future

We will provide information and support to help communities better understand their environment and the impact of their action on it and make sure they are engaged in the design and development of their local surroundings. We will support the growth of sustainable local businesses.

Partnership Management Plan Outcomes		Budget 2014-15	Budget 2015-16	Budget 2016-17
Budget		£1,161k	£1,126k	£1,003k
PMP9	Communities in the National Park are more sustainable with an appropriate provision of housing to meet local needs and improved access to essential services and facilities.			
PMP10	A diverse sustainable economy has developed that provides a wide variety of business and employment opportunities, many of which are positively linked to the special qualities of the National Park.			
PMP11	Local people have access to skilled employment and training opportunities.			
SDNPA Delivery Mechanisms				
Single Local Plan for the National Park, Community Led Planning, Enforcement Strategy, Development Management, West Sussex Rural Partnership, Support for LEADER, Brand and Identity, Sustainable Communities Fund, Sustainable Tourism Strategy, Infrastructure delivery Plan, behaviour change campaigns				
Projects & Partnerships				
Community Land Trust, Promoting Rural Broadband, PAWS, Apprenticeships, Broadband, LEADER bid development.				

Objective 3: Measures of SDNPA success	3 year Target/milestone		
	Year 1	Year 2	Year3
Number of apprentices supported by SDNPA	2	TBA	6
Influence increasing superfast broadband coverage across the SDNP			Increased coverage of broadband across the SDNP
Stakeholders aware of and using shared identity to raise the profile of the National Park in their venues or communities	Initial roll out to set baseline	Increase by 10%	Increase by 10%
Number of the target audience reached by our sustainable behaviour campaigns	Set baseline	Increase by 10%	Increase by 10%
% of SDNPA-led projects completed on time or on track for year three milestones	90	90	90
% of SDNPA-led projects completed to or under original budget	90	90	90
% of desired outcomes achieved for projects completed in the period	100	100	100
Improved community infrastructure delivered through the Community Infrastructure Levy	Produce an Infrastructure Delivery Plan by Q4	Produce charging schedule Q1	
Number of partners actively engaged in delivering projects against purpose 3 in the Delivery Framework of the PMP	Increase		
% satisfied with the quality of advice and support for Community led plans	Establish baseline figure	90	90
Number of Communities with Community lead plans endorsed or adopted by the SDNPA	20	10 (total 30)	10 (total 40)

Objective 4: An efficient and effective organisation that supports partnership working

We will manage our own resources to deliver high levels of customer services and value for money. We will seek to reduce the environmental impact of our activities. We will support and develop staff, Members and Volunteers to enable them to perform effectively.

Outcomes	Budget 2014-15	Budget 2015-16	Budget 2016-17
Budget	£4,965k	£4,852k	£4,759k
4.1	Deliver an effective development management service that achieves high levels of customer satisfaction.		
4.2	Develop project governance mechanisms that increase the capacity of the organisation to deliver outcomes and seek to maximise external funding opportunities.		
4.3	Staff, Members and Volunteers feel valued and have access to training and development opportunities.		
4.4	Develop strong relationships that allow partners to increase their capacity to effectively deliver the shared outcomes in the PMP.		
SDNPA Delivery Mechanisms			
Staff Survey, Learning and Development Strategy, Member Development Strategy, Governance framework, External Funding Strategy, Research Strategy, Enforcement Strategy, Development Management, Sustainable Communities Fund, Major Project Fund, 2014 Planning Customer Survey, Volunteer Development Strategy, shared identity, SDNP staff champions			
Projects & Partnerships			
Apprenticeships, Projects for the South Downs, Research Hub, Local Authority planning partnerships, review of culture and values, Governance Review evaluation			

Objective 4 Measures of SDNPA success	3 year Target/milestone		
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
<p>Information which supports PMP delivery is readily accessible to all those who need it</p> <p>Embed information management processes and procedures</p> <p>Finalise implementation of the recommendations from information management review</p> <p>Number of partners using the shared identity toolkits</p>	<p>Q2</p> <p>Q2</p> <p>Set baseline</p>	<p>Increase by 10%</p>	<p>Increase by 10%</p>
<p>Continuous improvement in customer service</p> <p>Increased satisfaction from Planning service users</p> <p>Put in place formal customer service standards</p> <p>Increased capacity to deliver projects to support the PMP delivery framework</p> <p>Develop External Funding Strategy</p> <p>Establish and embed project governance process</p>	<p>Establish baseline and set target Q2</p> <p>Standards agreed Q3</p> <p>Q1</p> <p>Q1 establish</p>	<p>Fully embedded Q1</p>	
<p>Motivated and effective employees</p> <p>% of staff with completed training and development plan (target 100%)</p> <p>Carry out and implement recommendations for a staff survey</p> <p>% of staff who feel positive about the organisation</p>	<p>100</p> <p>Q4</p> <p>80</p>	<p>100</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>100</p> <p>85</p>
<p>% of staff who feel enabled to communicate about the SDNP and the work of the SDNPA</p> <p>Efficient delivery of the planning service</p> <p>% of major applications dealt with in 13 weeks</p> <p>% minor and other applications determined within 8 weeks</p> <p>% valid applications validated in 5 working days</p>	<p>Set baseline from staff survey</p> <p>50</p> <p>80</p> <p>90</p>	<p>Increase by 10%</p> <p>50</p> <p>80</p> <p>90</p>	<p>Increase by 10%</p> <p>50</p> <p>80</p> <p>90</p>

Strategic Context

The South Downs National Park is subject to significant influences and pressures that can cause the character of the landscape to change. These are often termed 'drivers for change', and include the significant influences such as climate change, planning and development, land use and economic factors - amongst many others.

In identifying the key drivers of change within the PMP, we have started to understand, and map, the main pressures that exist now, and those that may exist in the future.

We have shown above, in the Overarching Objectives section, an analysis of how we are planning to allocate our resources based upon our Objectives and their intended outcomes. This allocation has been made with a number of assumptions in mind such as:

- a focussing of resources on supporting the development and delivery of the Local Plan;
- continued desire to seek efficiencies in core costs;
- focusing our resources as much as possible toward the achievement of our PMP outcomes; and,
- ensuring there is sufficient resilience within the organisation to maintain progress even against a climate of reducing funding.

It is of course possible to prepare alternative allocation models which would change the balance of resources available to any given area of our work. This is part of our governance approach and a key way in which our Members will design and develop the allocation of resources to meet the priorities that we set ourselves.

More information about the key drivers for changes within the SDNP can be found in section 1.6 of the PMP.

Organisational Context

Sustaining an organisation that operates efficiently and effectively is a major objective of the National Park Authority. To fulfil our Purposes and Duty we have put in place a revised management and organisational structure and will be putting in place systems which support a culture that is focussed and set up to deliver our Corporate Plan in an efficient way.

Over the period of this plan there are a number of key tasks to ensure we can deliver our Corporate Plan. There is also much that is already set up and working as 'business as usual' but that will require continued focus to ensure our processes and systems add value to our delivery. Examples of these key tasks include:

- developing a financial strategy that recognises the increasing importance of attracting a variety of funding sources;
- creating an organisational and delivery structure that reflects our business needs and is closely aligned to the Partnership Management Plan objectives;
- continuing to focus an increasing proportion of resources toward work on the ground which will allow us to align our staff closely to the business requirements whilst keeping overhead costs affordable;
- continuing to increase back office efficiency by keeping the corporate centre lean by innovative use of volunteers, outsourcing and working in partnership; and,
- developing further our close partnerships with local planning authorities and other providers to deliver a planning service in the South Downs National Park that offers service excellence and is locally focussed.

Financial planning

We are required to set a balanced budget in accordance with legislation. The basis for revenue expenditure is the pursuit of the 'Special Purposes' for which National Parks were designated under the Environment Act 1995. Section 65 of this Act defines the Special Purposes as conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of National Parks, and promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the National Parks by the public. In pursuit of these twin purposes we also have a duty to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park.

In light of recent grant funding reduction from government we have reviewed our whole budget from a zero-based approach. We have, through our recent restructure, established a staffing structure that will allow us to deliver our Partnership Management Plan priorities whilst maintaining a manageable headcount.

Over the period of this Corporate Plan, as well as ensuring efficient use of our resources, we will:

- identify opportunities to borrow and lever in investment;
- develop an external funding strategy and enabling programmes;
- work closely with the newly created Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to seek opportunities for joint working; and,
- develop greater understanding of, and access to, sources of European funding.

We also recognise the need to supplement our income by seeking new and innovative methods to support our work and the South Downs National Park. We are investigating and developing our approach to generating revenue and will consider the merits of borrowing opportunities for specific projects. We are also beginning to examine the mechanisms for setting up a South Downs National Park charitable trust.

Excellence in Planning

The South Downs National Park Authority is the eighth largest planning authority in England, dealing with around 4,000 applications per year and with responsibility for mineral and waste planning. The National Park has 15 local authorities with some of their areas within its boundaries. We are responsible for preparing and adopting a Local Plan for the whole of the National Park.

In order to help deliver our statutory planning functions, a series of agency agreements are in place with ten of the fifteen local authorities that have parts of their areas in the National Park. These set out how we deliver development management services in partnership with host authorities. The great majority (around 90%) of our planning applications are determined by the ten host authorities. We determine all of the planning applications in the other five local authority areas and those applications across the entire South Downs National Park which may have a 'significant impact'. We have developed and published guidelines that provide the parameters for determining whether a proposal might be significant.

This partnership approach also helps us to focus on developing a comprehensive planning policy framework for the South Downs National Park. This is consistent with our Guiding Principles as it is based on working in partnership, to improve quality and consistency for those using the service, and allows us to focus on strategic issues.

One of our key areas of focus for Planning over the period of this Corporate Plan is to conclude the partnership working on Joint Core Strategies with some Local Authorities and instead to focus upon the development and delivery of a single Local Plan for the whole of the National Park. We will also conclude Joint Core Strategies for minerals and waste. This

will be supported by the promotion and support of community led planning and where appropriate Neighbourhood Plans.

In addition, we are strengthening our approach to enforcement and have developed revised Enforcement Protocols containing a set of agreed priorities for all Authorities across the South Downs National Park. These protocols will be implemented from April 2014 onwards. In addition we are recruiting an additional in-house Enforcement Officer who will provide resource to develop a more proactive service.

Another area of focus will be on improving our planning administration systems. A key priority here will be the introduction, on a phased basis, of Consultee Access. This will provide a more effective consultation and response system for our customers when we consult them on, or when they wish to comment upon, planning applications. There will also be a focus on ensuring quality is maintained and enhanced, where possible, in relation to how we offer our service to customers and the outcomes from our decision-making. Ensuring high quality design that responds to the important landscape and to the climate change agenda will also be a priority for us. We will continue to use expertise to help inform the most important new planning proposals and to celebrate well designed schemes that evolve.

There will also be a continuing focus on working closely and effectively with our ten host authorities and others to help improve planning development management performance and the way that we report and publicise it.

Enhancing efficiency

In order to maintain a lean corporate core, work with partners and reduce duplication, we share many of our back office functions with other organisations. This allows us to have access to a greater breadth and depth of experienced professionals in finance, legal services and ICT than we would have if we were to operate these functions in-house.

However, in sharing services in this way, we need to maintain a keen focus on contract management to ensure value for money and delivery of service. Each main corporate contract has an identified contract manager who has the responsibility for actively monitoring performance and managing services from external providers. A contract management process is used across the organisation to ensure each contract is managed in the same manner.

As well as sharing services from others we will explore whether there are services we undertake that we could offer to partners and others organisations. This will feed into our plans for generating income for the Authority which we can then re-use in pursuit of our Purposes and Duty.

Continuously learning

It is our aim to be a learning organisation – a learning organisation is the term given to an organisation that facilitates the learning of its people and continuously transforms itself based on lessons learnt and feedback it receives.

In order to do this we have a number of mechanisms:

- Benchmarking – We collect information and data from other organisations, in both the private and public sector, to learn and use good practice from others.
- Peer Review – In 2012 we underwent the National Park Authority Peer Review process. This has provided us with a great deal of useful feedback on our set up to date and those areas where we might be able to make improvements. We have developed an improvement plan which will be monitored regularly. It has also highlighted areas of strength so we can learn from those and duplicate good practice in other places.
- Internal Audit – We undergo a programme of planned internal audit, conducted by a third party. This enables us to test the processes and systems we have in place in order to ensure we are adhering to policy and best practice. Recommendations from internal audits are actively managed and regularly reported to the Governance Committee to ensure appropriate Member involvement and scrutiny.
- Service and project reviews – We will conduct reviews of our major service areas and projects in order to examine how we work and how effectively projects have been managed to ensure we are delivering all possible efficiency savings in the short, medium and long term.
- Complaints and compliments – We actively seek customer feedback on our performance and work with customers to achieve high service levels. We will aim to put in place formal customer service standards and ensure our people are appropriately supported to offer the right level of proactive service to our customers and stakeholders.
- Customer Survey – We actively seek customer feedback on the performance of our Planning service. We will carry out regular customer surveys to help improve the service provided by the SDNPA and the host authorities who provide Planning services on our behalf.

Valuing our people

Our staff, Members and Volunteers are fundamental to our success, especially as we progress through to the implementation of our Partnership Management Plan. To achieve success we must foster a common culture and create a fully integrated workforce, which has the capabilities to successfully deliver our objectives.

To achieve this, we have implemented the following:

- Staff and Member survey – We think it is important to gather the views and opinions of our people to inform future policy development.
- Volunteer strategy and action plan – We want to further support our Volunteer Ranger Service as well as develop volunteering across the SDNP.
- Training and skills development – We recognise the importance of developing the skills and competencies of our people to enable them to deliver. To support staff, Members and Volunteers in this we have an induction programme that is aimed at developing an underpinning contextual knowledge for staff; we have introduced courses on themes such as ‘Planning for non planners’, project management and communication which will

build skills and competencies; we offer relevant training for volunteers to ensure they are appropriately equipped to work with us; we support staff in attending job-specific training and development events and offer opportunities for further education.

- Consultation – We have a staff joint consultation group and work closely with UNISON.
- PDR system – We have a system of performance pay that encourages and rewards superior performance for all staff. This includes a set of competencies we encourage staff to work to.

Additionally, in the last year the organisation has been restructured to make more efficient use of our existing resources, to align the structure with the statutory purposes and the PMP outcomes and to improve our resilience to meet future challenges. The new structure is also designed to provide stronger, forward facing delivery teams. The structure has identified a number of apprentice posts which will allow the SDNPA to develop skills in young people both in office and field based roles.

Our culture

Alongside effective management, organisational structures and our organisational values, we seek to embed a culture which makes us an organisation that:

- values partnerships and the contribution that other people and organisations can make towards National Park purposes;
- respects local people and visitors;
- releases the potential of communities and other organisations;
- acts with integrity and local and national accountability;
- listens, engages and innovates;
- is open and transparent;
- delivers value for money and effectiveness; and,
- strives for best practise and excellence in all it does.

How do we ensure risks are managed?

We define risk management as “the culture, processes & structure which come together to optimise the management of potential opportunities and adverse effects.” It enables the effective use of resources, secures the assets of the organisation and its continued financial and organisational well-being. As a publicly accountable body this is a vital part of ensuring we can demonstrate effective use of resources and delivery against agreed plans.

The purpose of managing risks is to safeguard us, our customers and the interests of our stakeholders, by identifying and managing all threats to the achievement of our objectives. Our risk management approach considers the impact and likelihood of events, changes or issues affecting the achievement of our objectives. Risks are assessed using a standard risk scoring matrix to provide a level of significance. Risks are kept continually under review and the levels change depending on the mitigations in place. In doing so we hope to foster an improved risk management culture, generate a better understanding of risks associated with our work and how we can mitigate for them.

Our corporate risk register provides a prioritised list of those risks which could affect the achievement of our objectives. This register is agreed by the Strategic Management Team (SMT) and reviewed by SMT and Members regularly. Each Directorate also has a risk register from which major risks are escalated to the corporate register if necessary. Major projects each have a specific risk register and health and safety risk assessments are regularly carried out for events and for certain activities carried out by our Rangers and Volunteers.

More detailed information is included in our full risk register which is kept under review and regularly updated and presented to our Governance Committee at each of its meetings.

Social responsibility

It is our aim to be a socially responsible organisation, delivering our objectives and plan in such a way as to reduce our impact on the natural environment and ensure we are inclusive in all we do. There are a number of ways we seek to manage our impact on the South Downs National Park both in terms of the natural and social environment. These are explained in brief below.

Sustainability Action Plan

We are all aware of the need to keep the National Park a clean, green space and with that in mind we need to think about how we, as an organisation, might be able to reduce our carbon footprint. We can act as an exemplar by demonstrating best practice in our response to climate change. We want to be recognised as a leading player in managing the impacts of climate change on the South Downs National Park and contributing to a low carbon economy.

The Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan is focused on the difference we as an organisation can make in terms of our direct impacts. It addresses how we aim to undertake our business in as sustainable a way as possible.

We have identified four areas to focus on and frame the action plan around:

- Policy – This concerns the way we make decisions, ensuring they are underpinned by the five principles of sustainable development. This means that our decision making processes should include an assessment against these five principles. This includes regular review of the impact of our policies.
- Operations – This is about using our assets and directing our activities in a more sustainable way, for example, to take account of environmental limits by reducing carbon emissions, water use and waste.
- Procurement – This is about the way in which we procure to ensure that we maximise the positive benefits and minimise the negative impacts upon the environment, communities and economies from which goods and services are sourced.
- People – This is how our staff, Members and Volunteers are expected and enabled to behave sustainably when carrying out South Downs National Park Authority business. It is also about promoting awareness and encouraging our people to be ambassadors in their work with the wider community.

Equality and Diversity Policy

We are committed to tackling discrimination and promoting equality and diversity in all areas of our work, including service provision, access to services, employment and policy development.

We aim to do so in a manner that is transparent and in line with our guiding principles and values and we expect all who are associated with the Authority – Members, staff and

Volunteers, as well as partners and contractors who work with us – to uphold the policy and actively promote it when representing the Authority.

We aim to be an inclusive organisation, where diversity is respected, valued and promoted. We are committed to comply with the Equality Act 2010, along with relevant best practice guidelines and Codes of Practice, as outlined by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. As well as the protected characteristics specifically covered by the Equality Duty, we have also chosen to include socio-economic factors to our list of protected characteristics, given the nature of our business, our overarching purposes and duty and the importance which we place on developing employment and social capacity opportunities.

We are specifically committed to:

- promoting access to the National Park for all users;
- encouraging people from different ethnic communities to visit the park and access its complete range of services;
- considering the needs of people suffering from social exclusion either through employment or economic disadvantage;
- promoting equality and valuing diversity within the workforce; and,
- ensuring that all who work for, or represent the Authority, have received training which enables them to confidently challenge discrimination or inappropriate behaviour.

Our Equality and Diversity Policy provides a clear framework for translating our policy into action. It outlines the responsibilities of Members, the Senior Management Team, managers and individuals to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and will be monitored in order to ensure that our Equality and Diversity, and other associated policies, are complied with and that corrective action is initiated in the event that they are not.

Approach to procurement and support of local suppliers

We are committed to ensuring that services are delivered in a way that protects the quality of the environment and minimises any adverse impact on community well being. We recognise that procurement can be integral in delivering more sustainable outcomes for the National Park and that to achieve this it is necessary to ensure that environmental and broader sustainability considerations are taken into account throughout the procurement process, along with the use of local suppliers where possible.

We are committed both to outsourcing services and to working in partnership. This culture of partnerships and outsourcing places a strong reliance on partners, suppliers and contractors to deliver the goals of the organisation. It is important therefore that the procurement and contract management function is sufficiently robust to ensure that the best possible value is obtained from all of those relationships.

We are developing ways to engage with suppliers, especially those who are local and share the overall ethos of the National Park, to ensure their experience of bidding for work with us is positive. We publish tender opportunities on our website and encourage early supplier involvement in an aim to promote better and more cost effective outcomes both for ourselves and the supplier.

We feel it is not enough to include sustainability as part of our evaluation criteria. Sustainability is considered for each contract as part of the objective setting process in the development of the sourcing strategy. We consider sustainability in the following terms:

- Environmental – These can be met through the output of the supplier by stipulating the type of materials and the content of those materials that they provide under the contract. Examples of this might be in recycled paper, energy efficient electrical devices or timber from FSG approved sources. Environmental considerations can also be taken into account with regard to the supplier’s inputs; how they go about their own business in terms of the working methods they use, how they source materials and their own practices for specifying sub-contractors.
- Economic – This is about the local economy and not specifically about local suppliers. While it is not legal to specify local suppliers, it is possible to examine the contributions that a supplier might make to the local economy as a result of winning a particular contract, through sourcing, recruitment, training etc.
- Social – This is very similar to economic and again it is possible to examine in some contracts, what a supplier can contribute to the social wellbeing of a community as a result of winning a contract. This can range from recruiting long term unemployed to providing legacy plant or equipment to the local community.

Governance

Our governance framework, which brings together an underlying set of legislative requirements, governance principles and management processes is in place to support us in delivering good performance, good use of public money and ultimately, good outcomes.

Our Corporate Governance Framework, which was reviewed in 2013, ensures accountability to our users, stakeholders and the wider community. It comprises the systems, processes and values by which decisions are made and functions undertaken to deliver the purposes and duty. Making up our Corporate Governance Framework are:

- our local code of corporate governance;
- standing Orders and committee terms of reference that regulate the proceedings, meetings and business of the Authority and its Committees;
- our Scheme of Delegation is a framework for decision-making and accountability between meetings of the full Authority. It contains detailed provisions on the powers and responsibilities delegated to committees and officers of the Authority;
- financial Regulations and Procedures direct the proper administration of our financial affairs and lay out the financial policies of the Authority; and,
- procurement procedures and contract standing orders ensure that our procurement practices are robust and effective while remaining transparent and in accordance with recognised good practice.

During the last year we have reviewed and revised our governance arrangements, including a review of the number and structure of formal and informal meetings of National Park Authority Members. A new Committee structure came into place in January 2014. The streamlined structure enables Members to focus on their strategic role in developing and approving policy and for monitoring and reviewing delivery and performance.

Supporting our Corporate Governance Framework, and underpinned by our values and guiding principles, we have in place codes of conduct that guide our Members and staff in their work. We have a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct and this is reflected in our codes and protocols.