TARGETED INVESTMENT AREAS

Natural Capital Investment Areas
These are areas which the evidence has shown to be 'hotspots' for environmental interventions

NATURAL CAPITAL INVESTMENT AREAS

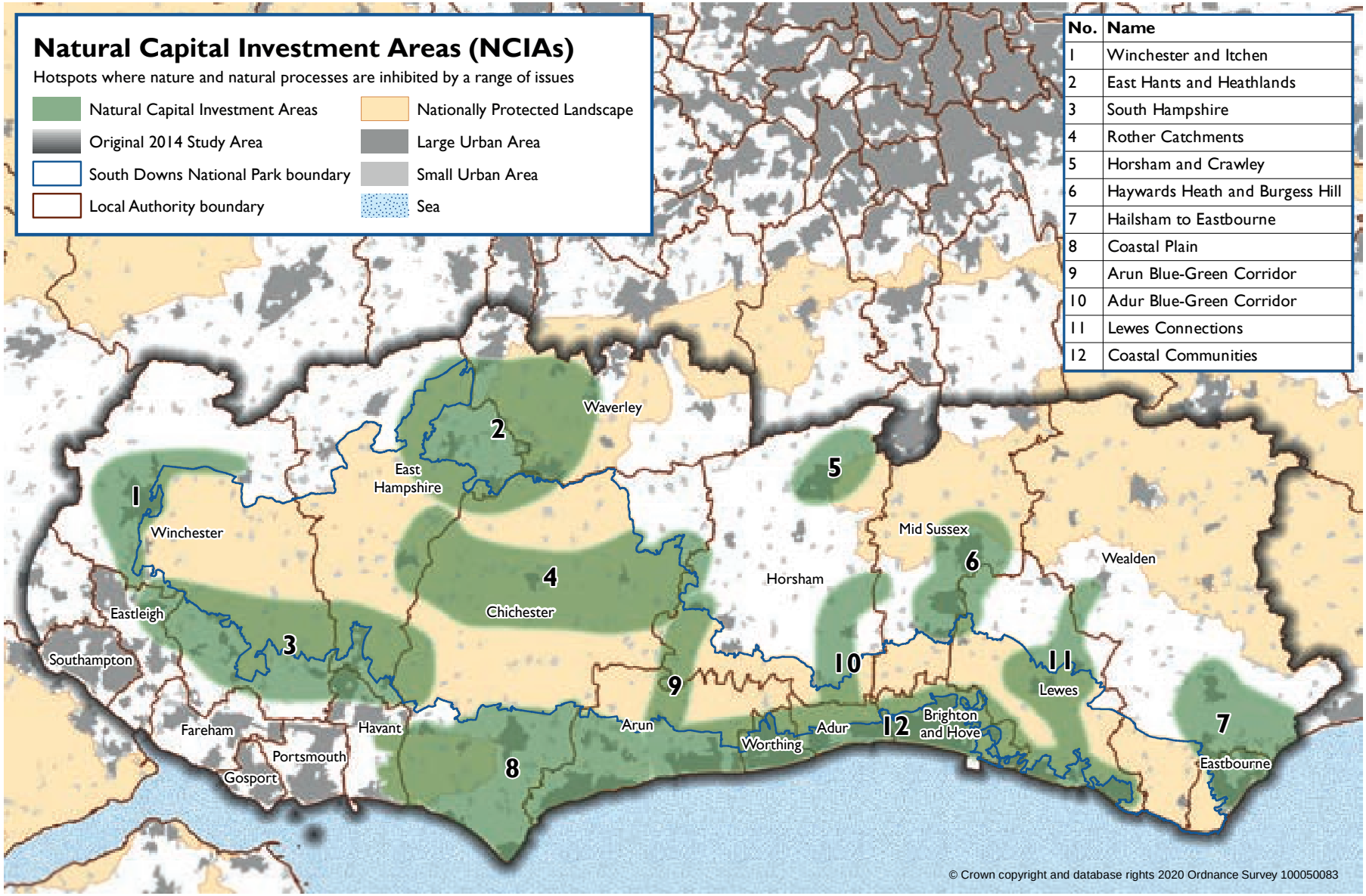
3.121 Analysis of the evidence showed that there were parts of the Network area which were particularly challenging on a wide range of environmental issues and these areas needed a focused approach as a result. These areas have been called Natural Capital Investment Areas (NCIAs) and are shown on Plan 38.

3.122 The NCIAs are areas in which the coalescence of a number of issues indicated the need for more targeted, strategic and cross-cutting intervention. Each of the NCIAs, while unique in their particular set of issues, needs and opportunities, shared this feature.

3.123 The evaluation process included a review of the green infrastructure provision in an area, its current green infrastructure functionality, potential pressures on the area and current interventions or planned activity (where known). Accordingly where activities or interventions are already taking place in an area of potential need, these areas have not been included as NCIAs.

3.124 While in many of the NCIAs there are organisations and projects operating and policies in place, the scope for more joined-up approaches to deal with cross-sectoral and cross-boundary issues is universally applicable. As the NCIAs have been developed from a sub-regional scale review, they provide the opportunity for local level planning within a wider context.

PLAN 38: NATURAL CAPITAL INVESTMENT AREAS (NCIAS)



1. Winchester and Itchen

This NCIA follows the River Itchen from south of Winchester city and in an arc to the north. The River Itchen, itself a Special Area of Conservation, and the adjoining land which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, also form one of the Network's Blue- Green Corridors, linking villages to the north, through Winchester City and to the south to Eastleigh/ Southampton. Winchester lies on the edge of the South Downs National Park and is an important interface area with the National Park.

Strengths

- Gateway at the western extremity of the South Downs National Park;
- The large river valley passes through the historic city of Winchester, providing immediate access to semi natural greenspace for city dwellers together with St Catherine's Hill SAM;
- Pilgrims Way, the South Downs Way, and the Itchen Way provide long distance recreational routes from Winchester along or across the river valley.

Weaknesses

- River Itchen SSSI and SAC as requires quality improvements;
- Fragmented rights of way network beyond the river corridor;
- The M3 forms a barrier between Winchester and the National Park;
- Proximity of the river corridor to the city creates pressure for development and impacts from major infrastructure.

Opportunities

- Natural blue-green corridor offering potential for multifunctional improvements – water quality, flood management, habitat connectivity and recreation;
- River Itchen Site of Special Scientific Interest is 66% favourable/unfavourable recovering;
- Improving access for residents to natural green space
- Link biodiversity and recreation approaches to reduce pressure on biodiversity sites
- Explore potential to link isolated heritage assets, including Registered Parks and SAMs to the city
- Opportunities for habitat connectivity – chalk download east of Winchester, River Itchen valley,
- Naturalise watercourses, remove barriers to fish movement,
- Utilise natural water management, eg, Winnall Moors;
- Blue-Green corridor links to PfSH area, scope for joint working around M3;
- Areas of high demand for noise regulation around the M3 and areas within the town centre;
- 'Keeping rivers cool' program for trout species.

Threats

- The high biodiversity value sites of the river valley provide accessible greenspace but pressure for housing is increasing recreational pressure on these sites;
- The Rver Itchen special area of conservation and SSSI are in 'recovering' condition and are rich in biodiversity; it is therefore more vulnerable to changes in both water quantity and quality (nutrient enrichment from waste water, road runoff) along with physical modification and siltation;
- Pressure of development adjacent to or in close proximity to the River Itchen have potential impact on both water quality and water quantity; approaches;
- Noise regulation & air quality;
- Integrated recreation management;
- Inappropriate management by landowners along the River Itchen could affect its quality.

2. East Hants and Heathlands

This NCIA lies includes many heathland sites, many of which are of international importance and in several administrative boundaries (National Park, East Hampshire and Waverley District Councils, Surrey, Hampshire and West Sussex County Councils and Surrey Hills AONB). Several European sites are recognised as being sensitive to recreation, for which mitigation measures are required, but many more have been highlighted as sensitive by land managers, for which mitigation of impacts is very challenging.

Strengths

- A co-ordinated approach to management and people engagement is being developed through Heathlands Reunited Heritage Lottery Fund Project (which also extends south into the Rother Catchment NCIA);
- Greensand Heaths Living Landscape Project operating in this area;
- Liss riverside railway walk.

Weaknesses

- Protection of European designated sites is secured through development contribution, but other non-European sites are currently under-resourced.

Opportunities

- Continue good work of Heathlands Reunited project to fully integrate landscape-scale habitat conservation and green infrastructure;
- Further partners need to be engaged to link strategic development planning and provision of green infrastructure on development sites to ensure that recreational space is provided not just as mitigation for European designated sites but to protect the other heathland sites and to improve habitat connectivity;
- Identify heritage assets for including in green infrastructure projects to protect isolated heritage features;
- Management approaches developed through Heathlands Reunited project embedded and continued after the project to fully secure the legacy;
- Recreational links between protected landscapes.

Threats

- Continued disconnect of habitat, green infrastructure and development planning – protection of 'the best' and less robust approaches for 'the rest'.

3. South Hampshire

This NCIA lies across the northern PfSH area and the southern part of Winchester and East Hampshire districts. There is a need for a strong partnership approach between the four local authorities, two counties, National Park and PfSH. Alongside a large existing population, significant new housing is planned. The PfSH Green Infrastructure partners have plans and policy in place to provide green infrastructure within PfSH. Investment and coordinated planning needs to overlap and extend to the southern area of the National Park.

Strengths

- PfSH GI strategy and network in place;
- Backbone of accessible sites and access routes;
- Queen Elizabeth Country Park (QECP) is one of the most visited countryside sites in the Network area;
- Remnants of medieval Royal Forest of Bere.

Weaknesses

- Fragmented network of green spaces which are poorly linked;
- Noise regulation & air quality considerations along main roads;
- Recreational pressure on sensitive coastal sites;
- Underuse of existing large scale GI – eg Royal Victoria Country Park, Southsea Common.

Opportunities

- Integrated recreation management to address pressure, especially around QECP/ Butser Hill SAC;
- Link sites with access routes;
- Link with PfSH partners; Forest of Bere – potential for landscape- sites;
- Forest of Bere – potential for landscape scale project incorporating biodiversity, access, cultural heritage and landscape;
- Work with partners to develop this sub-regional project;
- Improve habitat connectivity between New Forest National Park and South Downs National Park and the Coast;
- Extend woodland – provide more areas for recreation;
- Improve access to the Solent – issues along the M3;
- Access connectivity between the New Forest National Park and the South Downs National Park.

Threats

- Pressured edge of National Park, need to protect landscape quality;
- Likely visitor pressure increase;
- c16,000 new houses (at time of report) in the vicinity with potential to increase pressure on greenspace sites;
- Loss of Strategic Gaps and views south from the South Downs ridge;
- Easy access from PfSH to southern East Hants sites may lead to recreational pressure.

4. Rother Catchment

This NCIA follows the wider catchment of the River Rother from Liss, through Petersfield and Midhurst, to join the River Arun at Pulborough Brooks. This NCIA is wholly within the National Park and crosses three local authority boundaries; East Hampshire, Chichester and Horsham and Hampshire and West Sussex County Councils.

Strengths

- Wholly in National Park;
- Co-ordinated management and people engagement being developed through Heathlands Reunited Project;
- Several active projects – potential for added-value in combined approaches;
- Some specialized agricultural production on the fine Rother Valley soils – eg Asparagus;
- Distinctive riverside settlements and hamlets;
- Wide variety of habitat types in this NCIA.

Weaknesses

- Across three local authorities;
- String of heathland sites, some SSSI's but also undesignated sites potentially sensitive to recreational pressure;
- Loss of topsoil due to silty soils, agricultural practices and flash flooding.

Opportunities

- Heathland enhancement;
- Pulborough Brooks key site for biodiversity and access;
- Blue-green towns and villages, make water quality, biodiversity and appreciation of water central to communities of Petersfield, Liss, Midhurst, Pulborough;
- Heathland, woodland and chalk grassland connectivity;
- Bat conservation around Ebernoe Common and The Mens SAC's; strategic planning to protect flight lines and routes to SAC;
- River catchment green infrastructure initiatives, diffuse pollution and sediment management;
- Cultural landscape projects: parks and gardens;
- Disused railway lines providing potential access routes.

Threats

- Potential recreation pressure as a result of housing growth at boundary of National Park at Bordon;
- Pressure for development in Petersfield, Midhurst, Liss and Petworth;
- Continued erosion of river channel(s) due to flash flooding causing siltation and affecting water quality through slow moving and deep water.

5. Horsham and Crawley

Growth of these towns is ongoing with more planned. This includes an extension to Crawley on the boundaries of both Horsham and Mid-Sussex districts. As these towns continue to grow, landscape, communities and access could come under increasing pressure unless green infrastructure is planned to develop access connections, greenspace provision and protect the edge of the High Weald AONB.

Strengths

- Good railway connection between the urban areas;
- Sustrans Regional Cycle Route 20 links to the National Park and to the coast at Brighton.

Weaknesses

- Some areas lack greenspace and have fragmented rights of way access;
- St Leonards Watershed Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA) requires sensitive management.

Opportunities

- The delivery and ongoing development of Horsham's Green Infrastructure Strategy and green infrastructure opportunities from new development;
- Integrated approaches to managing Arun, Adur and Mole: enhance access, water resource protection and habitat connectivity and protect High Weald AONB;
- Woodland enhancement in Rusper Ridge BOA: enhance habitats, strengthen landscape, integrate development and provide robust recreational sites to serve growing population;
- Potential for improved access / enhancements to green spaces in urban areas;
- Potential to incorporate historic parks around Horsham town into wider green infrastructure projects and funding bids.

Threats

- Cumulative effects of development across boundaries of Horsham and Mid-Sussex;
- Effects of development on the Rusper Ridge BOA between Horsham and Crawley;
- Development-related pressures on the edge of High Weald AONB;
- Historic parks around Horsham town potentially vulnerable to development – related pressures.

6. Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill

This NCIA includes Haywards Heath, Burgess Hill and Hassocks Hurstpierpoint, all within Mid Sussex but adjacent to the Lewes District and National Park borders and close to the boundaries of Wealden district and the High Weald AONB; requiring a cross-boundary approach. One of the largest housing allocations in the Network area is planned for Burgess Hill. This area will remain the focus of development pressure, lying between two protected landscapes, necessitating an integrated 'future-proofing' approach.

Strengths

- Burgess Hill Green Circle – key green infrastructure for this expanding town;
- Proximity to protected landscapes provides access resource for residents;
- Several nature conservation sites including Local Nature Reserves;
- Green infrastructure included in developing Neighbourhood Plans.

Weaknesses

- Neither Mid Sussex nor Wealden have green infrastructure strategies;
- Mid Sussex: no current green infrastructure policy;
- Haywards Heath less well served for access;
- Isolated heritage assets.

Opportunities

- Secure Burgess Hill Green Circle – seek further improvements;
- Cross boundary opportunities including links to Ditchling Country Park from Burgess Hill;
- Green infrastructure here would link High Weald AONB to National Park;
- Further develop an access chain: High Weald AONB – Haywards Heath – Burgess Hill – Hassocks – National Park;
- Further improve nature conservation and access for people in Local Nature Reserves.

Threats

- Development pressures now and in the future;
- No strategic green infrastructure plan to respond to the significant scale of development, especially to respond to windfall development;
- Key views and dark night skies are vulnerable;
- Medium to high climate change vulnerability due to small habitat sizes.

7. Hailsham to Eastbourne

The Hailsham to Eastbourne NCIA straddles Wealden and Eastbourne local authorities. There is development planned in both areas; in Hailsham and Polegate in Wealden, the latter being directly adjacent to the Eastbourne border. All of the settlements are situated on the upstream feeder streams for the Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar. Water resources are an issue, with constraints on waste water, flooding and the need for no adverse effect on Pevensey Levels.

Strengths

- Eastbourne Park is a large green infrastructure site within Eastbourne performing essential flood mitigation functions as well as providing a wider range of functions including recreation;
- The Heritage Coast is an important and reasonably accessible asset for the urban areas, guided by a partnership approach and the Sussex Heritage Coast Plan which embeds the Duty to Cooperate and the Special Qualities of the National Park.

Weaknesses

- Eastbourne Local Plan lacks a green infrastructure policy; no green infrastructure strategy planned. No Wealden District green infrastructure strategy;
- Lack of accessible natural greenspace, including in areas of poor health;
- Wilmington Wood a valuable recreational space but A22 is a barrier;
- Medium/high climate change vulnerability especially Eastbourne and Pevensey Levels.

Opportunities

- The strategic allocation plan for Polegate identifies on-site green infrastructure, but a greater opportunity is to improve the Biodiversity Opportunity Area, forming a blue-green corridor linking Eastbourne/ Shinewater; biodiversity, access and water;
- Realisation of Eastbourne's vision for Eastbourne Park;[126]
- Access improvements, building on the existing Cuckoo Trail;
- Pevensey Levels is a sensitive, highly visible landscape which should be strengthened with appropriate planting to provide a setting for and screening of new development;
- Opportunities around expansion of Arlington Reservoir.

Threats

- The strategic allocation at Polegate lies directly upstream from Shinewater/ Eastbourne Parks;
- Noise regulation: extensive areas of high need in Polegate (A27) and bypass, south east Hailsham and in Eastbourne;
- Whole area includes upstream tributaries to Pevensey Levels;
- Sensitive landscape around Pevensey Levels.

126 Eastbourne Park SPD February 2013 – Eastbourne Borough Council

8. Coastal Plain

This NCIA covers the low-lying coastal plain from the west of Littlehampton (where it intersects with the Arun Blue-Green Corridor and the Coastal Communities NCIA) through to Chichester in the north and Bognor Regis and the Manhood Peninsular in the south and including Chichester Harbour AONB. This area is important for crops and horticulture, along with areas internationally important for wildlife. The plain crosses Chichester and Arun local authority areas, requiring a joined-up approach to developing strategic approaches. There is a likely need to adapt to flood-risk and coastal change resulting from rising global temperatures, increased rainfall and storminess.

Strengths

- coastal erosion – managed retreat site at Medmerry;
- Arun has green infrastructure plan and policy, with longer term ambitions;
- The Manhood Fixing and Linking Our Wetlands (FLOW)[127] project is undertaking assessment work to identify potential improvements to wildlife and to reduce flood risk;
- Solent Recreation Mitigation Plan applies to this area where new housing development contributes to a mitigation fund for addressing the impacts of recreational use of overwintering migratory birds (3 SPAs).

Weaknesses

- Very little accessible natural greenspace across entire coastal plain, with some settlements having no sites or only small sites on the edge of the settlement;
- A27 is a major barrier to accessing National Park and areas of accessible greenspace and woodlands;
- Significant areas of poor health and deprivation, e.g. centre of Bognor Regis, Selsey and Yapton;
- Low density of PROW in the Coastal Plain and poor connectivity of those that are present.

127 **http://mwhg.org.uk/projects-and-groups/flow-project/**

Opportunities

- Development planned across several settlements in both local authority areas. Opportunity for co-ordinated approach in addressing some of the issues of the NCIA as a whole in response to development in both local authority areas;
- Opportunity for environment to support tourism and the local economy;
- Access improvements and circular walks will benefit both the economy and local residents;
- A need for recreation to be developed without increasing pressure on recreation sensitive biodiversity sites;
- Link existing access routes to improve access e.g. to the Manhood Peninsular;
- Deliver aspiration (in Arun Green Infrastructure Plan) for new open spaces to north west of Bognor and in Barnham area;
- Explore a new site of sufficient scale to serve residents in both districts with potential benefits in securing funding to deliver this, plus help to relieve pressure on Pagham and Chichester Harbours;
- Potential to link habitat improvement and flood mitigation;
- For partnerships to work together in delivering green infrastructure improvements e.g. The Arun & Western Streams Catchment Management Partnership, The Arun & Rother Rivers Trust and The Downs & Harbours Clean Water Partnership;
- Pollination Services: high demand along urban edge due to agricultural needs. Capacity to improve with improvements in green infrastructure especially in any future urban edge greenspace.

Threats

- Development planned across several settlements in both local authority areas;
- Chichester Harbour and Pagham Harbour are the most significant accessible natural greenspace sites but both are Natura 2000 sites which are sensitive to recreational pressure;
- Flooding is a risk across area;
- Low-lying landscape could be sensitive to change;
- Ecological climate change vulnerability – few areas of priority habitats within the coastal communities NCIA, but all are highly vulnerable;
- There is a likely need to adapt to flood risk and coastal change resulting from rising global temperatures, increased rainfall and storminess

9. Arun Blue-Green Corridor

This NCIA is one of the main river valleys which cuts through the South Downs National Park. These river valleys are important corridors for access to the Downs, especially for deprived coastal communities, for water resources and biodiversity. This NCIA extends from Littlehampton to Billinghurst, intersecting with the Rother Catchment, Coastal Plain and Coastal Communities NCIAs.

Strengths

- North-south connectivity – biodiversity, landscape, recreation;
- High biodiversity value and several biodiversity opportunity areas. Habitats include ancient woodland, wood pasture, chalk grassland, grazing marsh, reedbed, grassland and fen;
- Wash lands of the River Arun with SSSI designation including Pulborough Brooks SSSI, Arun Banks SSSI and Arun Valley SPA and SAC, with Upper Arun SSSI north of Pulborough.

Weaknesses

- Fragmented access network;
- Access barriers: lack of river crossings and major east-west railway and road barriers;
- Littlehampton has high deprivation, poor health and no accessible natural greenspace and is disconnected from nearby areas by railway and river;
- Pressure for highway improvement to ease traffic congestion.

Opportunities

- Make improving connections from Littlehampton to river and beyond a high priority;
- Requires co-ordinated approach between Arun, Chichester and Horsham Districts, SDNPA and West Sussex County Council;
- Cross boundary and cross sector approach required: view the river corridor as an asset for biodiversity, water resources, flooding and sea level rise management, heritage, recreation and tourism;
- Footpath along riverbank with potential to upgrade for cycling;
- Link routes to Ford Station – local access and tourism potential;
- 'Access for all' improvements at Pulborough Brooks as gateway to the river valley habitats;
- Habitat restoration, naturalising channels (much of river is embanked), reconnecting habitats, floodplain grazing marsh and other wetland projects;[128]
- Urban fringe south of National Park needs enhancement to strengthen landscape quality whilst retaining its distinctiveness.

Threats

- Ecological climate change vulnerability – medium to high vulnerability along catchment and valley;
- Longer-term issue of sea level rise in Lower Arun valley;
- Need to protect the long views to and from Arundel and across the low-lying landscape;
- The effects of new development and infrastructure on the river valley and it's inherent qualities.

128 **avvg.co.uk/**

10. Adur Blue-Green Corridor

This NCIA is one of the main river valleys cutting through the South Downs National Park. These valleys are important access corridors to the Downs, especially for deprived coastal communities, for water resources and biodiversity. This NCIA extends from Shoreham-by-Sea to Steyning/Upper Beeding, with the Adur continuing towards Henfield.

Strengths

- Access good along most of corridor (cycling and walking), including 37 mile Downs Link route between the North and South Downs;
- Proximity to Shoreham, Steyning and Bramber on the boundary of the SDNP.

Weaknesses

- Habitats less well connected than befits this important corridor: needs habitat restoration and connection, grazing marsh and wetland habitat;
- Surface water flooding issues and water quality issues for the aquifer;
- The Adur runs through the most narrow part of the SDNP making it vulnerable to pressures beyond the boundary.

Opportunities

- Raise recognition of importance of access corridor and link from coastal towns to Downs;
- Shoreham Harbour Joint Area Action Plan (JAAP) has potential to provide significant blue-green corridors;
- Shoreham Cement works: cultural heritage and opportunity for green infrastructure enhancement;
- Re-naturalise rivers, e.g. support Modular River Survey[129];
- To develop a 'Wild Adur' project (SWT).

Threats

- Shoreham Harbour JAAP could reduce views to the sea; green infrastructure needed to improve access and views;
- Landscape character, quality, views and access threatened by development especially Lancing and Sompting Gaps;
- High climate change vulnerability.

129 **https://modularriversurvey.org/morph-rivers/**

11. Lewes Connections

Lewes is one of the largest settlements within the South Downs National Park, situated on the River Ouse where the river cuts through the South Downs.

This NCIA includes Lewes town and two corridors – the north-south River Ouse corridor and the east-west Downland habitat and offers potential for an integrated approach to green infrastructure, incorporating water resources, access improvements and habitat connectivity.

Strengths

- Within the Brighton and Lewes Downs Biosphere;
- At the crossing point of Downs and rivers offering potential for connectivity – habitats, water resources and recreation;
- Active community interest in environmental issues.

Weaknesses

- Accessible natural greenspace around edge of Lewes but limited provision in town centre, with lack of play spaces and an existing deficit in sports and recreation areas;
- Steep valley topography and the extensive floodplain limits developable zones for the town;
- Steep topography limits the accessibility of surrounding open downland.

Opportunities

- Enhancements to blue-green corridor towards Uckfield and south to Newhaven;
- Explore natural solutions to flood issues (as indicated in Catchment Flood Management Plan)- upstream flood mitigation and habitat enhancement, tree planting and new wetlands; e.g. Trees on the Uck Project and Sussex FLOW initiative;
- Realising the recreational potential of the river (subject to planning policy);
- Access improvements – disused railway line to Uckfield (subject to any decision to re-open);
- High demand for noise regulation along most access roads into Lewes.

Threats

- Impact of planned housing growth in the context of environmental constraints of outward expansion of main towns as either within the SDNP, in or near designated areas or in flood risk areas, or constrained by the highway network;
- Potential pressure on existing green spaces;
- Mount Caburn SAC an important recreation site close to the town but was highlighted as potentially sensitive to recreational pressure by land managers;
- Medium to high climate change vulnerability Ouse catchment and valley;
- Air quality issues in Lewes;
- The steep valley sides are under increasing pressure to be developed.

12. Coastal Communities

This extensive NCIA stretches from Littlehampton in the west to Newhaven and Seaford in the east and includes Brighton and Hove, Worthing and Shoreham-by-Sea and includes two rivers, the Adur and the Ouse that connect the coast with the south Downs and Weald. There are multiple issues in this NCIA, with a commonality of needs, requiring co-ordinated action on many fronts. This includes the likely need to adapt to flood-risk and coastal change resulting from rising global temperatures,

Strengths

- The economic and cultural prominence of Brighton that has, along with Southampton, the highest property price rate of increase in the country;
- Excellent examples of cross-boundary strategies in the Brighton and Hove Lewes Downs Biosphere and Joint Area Action Plan for Shoreham Harbour;
- The geography provided by the Arun and Adur connecting the coast to the National Park;
- The apparent proximity of natural landscapes- Downs to the north and Coast to the south;
- Some good public transport links: Brighton Downs Link buses and Coastway rail route;
- Exemplary work done in Brighton & Hove creating butterfly banks with the DEFRA NIA funding;
- The economic and cultural prominence of Brighton that has, along with Southampton, the highest property price rate of increase in the country;
- Excellent examples of cross-boundary strategies in the Brighton and Hove Lewes Downs Biosphere and Joint Area Action Plan for Shoreham Harbour;
- The geography provided by the Arun and Adur connecting the coast to the National Park;
- The apparent proximity of natural landscapes- Downs to the north and Coast to the south;
- Some good public transport links: Brighton Downs Link buses and Coastway rail route.

Weaknesses

- High deprivation in some areas combined with poor health;
- Barrier effect of A27 & south coast railway;
- Development constrained between the National Park and coast, concentrating development and pressure within a smaller area;
- Existing accessible natural greenspace deficit and very low levels of other urban green infrastructure in many of the towns (a situation which could worsen with additional development growth);
- Limited Public Rights of Way network;
- Topography of the south coast plain – highly visible from the SDNP.

Opportunities

- Potential for local authorities to join forces to position this NCIA as a green infrastructure exemplar area – making the case that investment is essential to halt further deprivation and the loss of quality of life in already disadvantaged areas and that it fundamentally underpins economic prospects for these towns;
- Foundations to build upon JAAP for Shoreham Harbour and the Brighton and Hove Lewes Downs Biosphere – learning can be extended to other coastal towns in need of similar approaches;
- The South Downs NPA also has an interest to halt degradation in this pressurised part of the National Park;
- Potential to improve capacity to regulate local climate, to meet high demand;
- Capacity to regulate noise in areas of high demand through improving green infrastructure. Particular need in areas of high population density and poorer health – western Littlehampton, near A27 and A259 and around all main roads into town centres;
- Capacity to improve pollination services in high demand areas along the urban edge with green infrastructure especially future urban edge greenspace;
- Continue to work on the chalk Downland habitats created as part of the DEFRA Nature Improvement Area initiative;
- Strategic cross-boundary approach provides opportunity to develop joint strategies. This will help in understanding interactions, needs and opportunities – and potential solutions (i.e. Arun, Worthing, Adur, Brighton and Hove and South Downs NPA);
- More multifunctional use of strategic gaps to maximise this valuable, retained greenspace;
- Address traffic congestion and difficulty in east-west movement with strategic investment in sustainable transport across the entire NCIA;
- Develop strategic visitor management approach in highly visited area along southern boundary of National Park – to address visitor pressure on sites potentially vulnerable to recreation pressure and damage.

Threats

- Development pressure across the area with high levels of housing planned;
- Coastal flooding issues;
- Greenspace and strategic gaps are under pressure in all authorities;
- Ecological climate change vulnerability – areas of priority habitats within the coastal communities NCIA are highly vulnerable;
- Noise Regulation – all communities have large areas of high demand, likely due to high population density and poorer health. Some areas showing high capacity to deliver this need already and large areas where there is some capacity to regulate noise which could be improved through vegetation;
- There is a likely need to adapt to flood-risk and coastal change resulting from rising global temperatures, increased rainfall and storminess;
- Local climate regulation – extensive areas of high demand (need) across all coastal towns, but with capacity to improve through green infrastructure.
- The need to understand the issues for Brighton's urban fringe whereby wards with the poorest health & multiple indices of deprivation are frequently closest to the SDNP and have good access to natural greenspace.

IN SUMMARY

The evidence shows that the South Downs National Park sits within a hugely varied and interrelated area across South East England. It has revealed how pressure exerted in one area manifests an effect in another. Many land use decisions and policies can impact the provision of ecosystem services leading to their degradation which incurs both economic and social costs.

Nature and natural systems do not recognise local authority boundaries and it is in the interests of all stakeholders to acknowledge, understand and address issues collectively to ensure measures are effective, at the correct scale, and shared equitably. Planning for green infrastructure is a powerful tool in supporting and enhancing the provision of ecosystem services and it is hoped that this Network document will help to set out a strategic framework for coordinated action to support nature, people and the economy of the region.

The Authority would like to thank all of the individuals, organisations and stakeholders who have contributed their time and expertise towards the production of the Network documents since its inception in 2014.

WITH THANKS

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- Adur and Worthing Councils
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- Arun District Council
- Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
- Brighton and Hove City Council
- British Horse Society
- Chichester District Council
- East Hampshire District Council
- Eastbourne Borough Council
- English Heritage
- Environment Agency
- East Sussex County Council
- Fareham Borough Council
- Forestry Commission
- Gosport Borough Council
- Hampshire County Council
- Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
- Hart District Council
- Havant Borough Council
- Hampshire County Council
- Wealden District Council
- Horsham District Council
- Lewes District Council
- Mid Sussex District Council
- National Trust
- Natural England
- Portsmouth City Council
- RSPB
- South Downs Local Access Forum
- Southampton City Council
- Surrey Wildlife Trust
- Sussex Community Development Association
- Sussex Wildlife Trust
- Test and Itchen Catchment
- Test Valley Borough Council
- UCL
- Waverley Borough Council
- Wealden District Council
- Winchester City Council
- Woodland Trust
- West Sussex County Council