

SDNPA NATURE RECOVERY PROGRAMME 2024-25: Targets & Work Strands

Targets:

Nature Recovery = Core Nature + ReNature + Connecting people with nature

Framed by the South Downs National Park Wildlife Delivery Plan and Campaign for Nature Recovery #ReNature, our goal is to have one third of the South Downs National Park for nature (core nature + renature) and the other two thirds to be nature friendly.

High Level Targets*

- To secure an additional 13,000ha, or 33% of land managed for nature by 2030 – from a baseline of 25% land managed for nature.
- Maintain, enhance and/or restore existing key sites, habitats and species.
- To prepare for and implement Biodiversity Net Gain

HLT 1: ReNature the South Downs National Park.

ReNature: sites/initiatives where there is a significant change of land management whereby nature’s recovery or managing for biodiversity becomes the/a primary objective, contributing to the campaign goal of an additional 13,000 ha of land managed for nature / 33% by 2030.

HLT 2: Work to maintain, enhance and/or restore 30% existing Core Nature sites, and support key species recovery within the SDNP by 2030.

Core Nature: sites/initiatives which already have a primary objective for nature or managing biodiversity. For example, designated sites such as SSSIs, NNRs, LWS and ancient semi natural woodland. The existing 25% of land for nature.

HLT 3: To prepare for and implement Biodiversity Net Gain

HLT 4: Species Target (tbc) 1. Halt the decline of species in the South Downs National Park
2. Increase abundance of species in the South Downs National Park

*the HLTs will be reviewed as part of the PMP review and changes to the legislative framework (including 30x30, Environment Act 2021 and EIP 2023)

SDNPA Corporate Plan Targets (HLT1- HLT6) with Outcome Framework Targets (1-8)

| | High Level Target | Key Performance Indicator | Years 4-5 target | Outcome Framework Target |
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| HLT1 | HLT1 To secure an additional 13,000ha, or 33% of land managed for nature by 2030 form a baseline of 25% | H1.1 Total hectares of habitat restored, improved or created. H1.2 Total hectares of habitat restoration funded by The South Downs National Park Trust | H1.1 2600 hectares – This is a cumulative target over 10 years towards 13,000ha H1.2 2000 hectares funded by the South Downs National Park Trust | Target 1 Restore or create more than 250,000 hectares of a range of wildlife-rich habitats within Protected Landscapes, outside protected sites by 2042 (from a 2022 baseline). Target 4 Continuing favourable management of all existing priority habitat already in favourable condition outside of SSSIs (from a 2022 baseline) and increasing to include all newly restored or created habitat through agri-environment schemes by 2042. Target 8 Increase tree canopy and woodland cover (combined) by 3% of total land area in Protected Landscapes by 2050 (from 2022 baseline). |
| HLT2 | HLT2 Work to maintain, enhance and/or restore 30% existing Core Nature sites, | H2.1 Total extent of Core Nature sites where SDNPA activity is contributing towards favourable condition. | H2.1.1 3428 hectares – This is a cumulative target based on 30% of the South Downs National Park’s existing 25% Core Nature (in hectares). This figure is divided by 7 to give an annual figure (based on the fact that there are 7 years remaining to 2030) | Target 2 Bring 80% of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes into favourable condition by 2042. Target 3 For 60% of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes assessed as having ‘actions on track’ to achieve favourable condition by 31 January 2028. |
| HLT3 | HLT3 To prepare for and implement Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) commences. | H3.1 The requirement is for relevant applications to achieve at least a 10% biodiversity net gain increase from the pre-development biodiversity value. Additional indicators from BNG regulations are likely to be implemented in once delivery | H3.1 At least 10% biodiversity net gain increase in area, linear and watercourse habitats from the pre-development biodiversity value | |

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| HLT4 | HLT4 Species target | <p>H4.1 Halt the decline of species in the South Downs National Park</p> <p>H4.2 Increase abundance of species in the South Downs national Park support key species recovery within the SDNP by 2030.</p> <p>Bats, bees (including South Downs specialist solitary bees and bumbles), birds (farmland) and butterflies</p> <p>Number of species recovery programmes developed for delivery from 2023</p> | <p>Measure by using</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ National species monitoring programmes data extracted within the Park area and use, where possible, to develop trend lines. ○ target/ example species and/or develop a landscape specific abundance monitoring programme ○ citizen science – iNaturalist and iRecord | |
| HLT5 | South Downs National Park Authority to reduce its carbon footprint by 150 tonnes per annum in line with the 2030 net zero target. | H4.1 Total annual SDNPA carbon emissions | H4.1 150 tonnes (CO2) reduction on the previous year | Target 6 Reduce net greenhouse gas emissions in Protected Landscapes to net zero by 2050 relative to 1990 levels. |
| HLT6 | 5% reduction per annum in the overall carbon footprint of the South Downs National Park from the baseline reported in 2019. | H5.1 Total tonnes of CO2 reported year on year in annual LULUCF (Forestry component) data | H5.1 5% annual reduction (tonnes CO2) from 2019 baseline | Target 6 Reduce net greenhouse gas emissions in Protected Landscapes to net zero by 2050 relative to 1990 levels. |
| | | | | Target 5 Ensuring at least 65% to 80% of land managers adopt nature friendly farming on at least 10% to 15% of their land by 2030. |
| | | | | Target 10 Decrease the number of nationally designated heritage assets at risk in Protected Landscape |

Strategy context for Nature Recovery in the South Downs

The Delivery Plan for Wildlife in the National Parks in England sets out the collective nature recovery response by National Parks to the 25 Year Plan. [Delivery-Plan-for-Wildlife-in-National-Parks-FINAL.pdf \(nationalparksengland.org.uk\)](#). With an agreed vision – “National Parks sit at the heart of the nation’s nature recovery network; we are places where wildlife flourishes, habitats are maintained, restored, and expanded, and where everyone can experience nature and wildlife at their best. Strong local partnerships in each National Park will deliver 20% of the government’s nature recovery target on 10% of the land, saving/sequestering 330,000 tonnes of CO2 per year.”

Each National Park then has its own prospectus which sets out an ambitious but realistic programme for nature recovery over the next 10 years. This is accompanied by the South Downs Wildlife Delivery Plan which establishes a South Downs vision. [PR_2021July15-Agenda-Item-8.pdf \(southdowns.gov.uk\)](#) (Appendix 2 & 3).

“Our vision for the South Downs: The South Downs National Park will be a climate resilient working landscape where all wildlife flourishes and communities thrive in a nature rich environment. By 2030 working with a strong partnership of farmers, land managers, communities and a wide range of partners, we will deliver one third of land dedicated for nature to flourish, protecting, managing, connecting and enlarging our core wildlife sites and priority habitats. We will encourage two thirds of land to be Nature friendly by incorporating features and practices that increase opportunities for wildlife alongside established land uses.

- The Rich habitats of the South Downs will be enhanced, extended, connected and act as a core to a wider wildlife network.
- As a special landscape, the South Downs will act as a nature rich core connecting to the wider countryside beyond its boundaries.
- Wildlife will flourish and will be able to move easily through the landscape and adapt to climate change.
- Our farmed landscape will remain productive but will also be a place where nature thrives.
- People living in and visiting the national park will be connected to the special landscape and the unique wildlife that lives here.

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| <p>Internal:</p> <p>Partnership Management Plan Review</p> <p>Support with nature recovery elements of the State of the Park Review.</p> <p>Review nature recovery targets</p> <p>Embed Outcomes Framework (relevant targets)</p> <p>Landscape connectivity and severance - evidence – green bridges</p> <p>SDNPA Nature Recovery strategy</p> <p>Embed 30x30 into SDNPA nature recovery strategy and delivery</p> <p>Apply the SD Wildlife Delivery Plan habitat targets and SD core nature network map.</p> <p>Marry the Map and the targets together around the 4 main habitat types. Align targets with net zero with nature and National Park for all targets.</p> <p>Embed the SD Wildlife Delivery Plan and SD core nature network into the next SD LP Review and SD PMP Review.</p> <p>Continue to understand and incorporate the Environment Act 2021 Regulations and Guidance into our nature recovery programme.</p> <p>SSCP Landscape Management Plan review 2025+</p> <p>Strengthened Biodiversity Duty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align consideration of the strengthen biodiversity duty with the PMP and LP review processes. Refresh the first consideration produced December 2023. Publish a Biodiversity Duty Report no later than 1 January 2026 <p>Biodiversity Net Gain</p> <p>Readiness paper and Action Plan. Key priorities:</p> | <p>PS/CJ/JK/LR/KS/CK</p> <p>CJ/PS/JK/LR/KS/CK</p> <p>CK/CJ</p> <p>CO/SC</p> <p>KS/LR</p> | <p>Q3</p> <p>Q4</p> |
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| <p>Shift from interim Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) advice to mandatory BNG under the Environment Act</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ BNG Readiness ○ Work with Districts & Boroughs re potential strategic BNG sites ○ Training ○ “Irreplaceable habitats”, “strategic significance” ○ Planning & Exemptions ○ Off-site Register ○ (On-site Register) <p>South Downs Green Finance summit/ conference – 23 May 2024</p> <p>Host Agenda (southdowns.gov.uk)</p> <p>Mechanisms</p> <p>Continue to develop readiness and understanding of other/new mechanisms to deliver/ support nature recovery:</p> <p>Nitrates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop and operate an approach to secure Nitrate Mitigation Schemes, helping to restore Nature at scale ○ Develop and operate a Broker Role for Nitrates, helping to restore Nature at scale by adopting a habitat banking approach that empowers landowners. ○ Develop approach to LPA Compliance Monitoring (strategic & other off-site Nutrient Mitigation) | <p>MA</p> | <p>2023 onwards</p> |
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| <p>BNG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop and operate an approach to secure BNG Schemes, helping to restore Nature at scale ○ Develop and operate a Broker Role for BNG, helping to restore Nature at scale by adopting a habitat banking approach that empowers landowners. ○ Develop approach to LPA Compliance Monitoring (strategic & other off-site BNG) <p>Carbon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop a Woodland Carbon platform, working in Partnership with Palladium, for the National Park that provides a Carbon + price which works for Landowners and local buyers. ○ Deliver woodland carbon through newly created woodland <p>Voluntary Biodiversity Units</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Through partnership working with environmental impact consultants, utilise the approaches from the Nature Market Principles to create a new voluntary biodiversity market place for corporate buyers <p>The use of Conservation Covenant Agreements as an additional tool to secure Renature should the need arise.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Finalise application to become a Responsible Body ○ CCAs ready as a tool for nature recovery. <p>Agri Env (FiPL, Landscape Recovery pilot, Local Nature Recovery tier)</p> | <p>EA + NRW</p> <p>MA + NRW</p> <p>NJ/BF</p> | <p>Q1</p> |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Year 4 delivery ● Use the Call for Nature Sites (C4NS) approach for future ReNature initiative generation. ● Area Teams: grassroots delivery and influencing landowners/managers ● Potential of CIL as a mechanism with the parish councils | <p>Area Teams</p> <p>NRWG</p> | |
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| <p>Resource Development</p> <p>Develop and manage Nature Recovery project pipeline</p> <p>Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue to develop the Nature Recovery Information Hub as a useful and effective resource by organising the information more effectively I:\Habitats_Species\Biodiversity\Nature Recovery Strategy\Biodiversity Monitoring Framework\Case studies index.docx ● Regular internal awareness raising via Update ReNature section ● Managing internal nature recovery guidance/ information on the intranet. Define what guidance is needed to be produced? ● Develop BNG resources including updating the BNG Technical Advice Note and BNG Policy within the Local Plan, website information & links to ReNature ● Explore/ define role of soils in nature recovery ● “How to manage hedgerows guide” – develop as part of NR Hub/ LCA ● Develop “scrub management plans” template and guidance. | <p>Lead:</p> <p>CJ</p> <p>Comms</p> | <p>Timeline:</p> <p>2024</p> |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement NR Comms Plan 2024/25. Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Habitats: Focus to be Hedges, chalk grass, heath and water. Species: Birds, Bats, Bees, Butterflies (4B's) Develop further best practice/case studies – share stories and learning covering multiple audiences and mechanisms Develop graphics to illustrate progress based on NR Log data (eg by ha, mechanism (£), audience type...) • Key dates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Nature Challenge April 2024 • ReNature Festival 2024 – Nature and Climate theme/ 30 days Wild Chalk • Dark Skies Festival 2024 – Dark Skies as a Habitat eg, glow worms, bats, moths • Species focus for comms (4Bs – bats, birds, bees and butterflies) • Internal communication – so all officers are advocates for NR? (Improve Authority-wide awareness and understanding of NR tools, mechanisms etc..) • SSCP visitor engagement Fundraising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build and expand the Trust fundraising grant programmes, including ReNature, Beelines, Trees for the Downs and Pounds for Ponds. Explore the potential for a dedicated Hedgerow Fund, outside of Trees for the Downs. • Successfully secure fundraising bids in development, in particular Downs to the Sea and Woolbeding application to the National Grids LEI scheme • New NHLF fund – Explore options for HLF Integrated Landscape Fund – could include Weald to Waves, Changing Chalk and Western Project connecting South Downs and New | | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form a partnership around the evidence and feasibility for green bridges • BNG through planning (on site, not strategic sites) • Awareness raising and individual/community action through engagement work (eg SDYA, Education, Comms...) • On the ground projects, initiatives and advice • Manage nature recovery pipeline of deliverable projects for nature recovery with ranger teams • Using existing/new mechanisms to deliver eg FiPL, ELMs, offsetting, Water Company schemes, grants, funded projects • Ensure support for the Eco Young Engaged (EYE) project by providing analysis of data fed into the https://www.educationnaturepark.org.uk/ | <p>CJ</p> <p>CJ</p> <p>CJ JK</p> | |
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| <p>Action for Core Nature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support key projects: Changing Chalk, Big Chalk, Weald to Waves, NE Nature Recovery Area / The Chalk Coast super NNR, WEPs, Kingley Vale Protected Sites Strategy pilot (including Fair Game Project), River Rother initiative etc..etc.. • On the ground projects, initiatives and advice, working with key partners and land managers • Biological Monitoring Framework: how we measure existing habitat condition? Explore methodology for other habitats. • Using existing/new mechanisms to deliver eg FiPL, ELMs, offsetting, on and off-site BNG, Water Company schemes, grants, funded projects • SSCP delivery of CSS agreement (2024-2029) | <p>Lead:</p> <p>NRWG/ Area Teams</p> | <p>Timeline:</p> |
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| <p>Action for Species</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take forward SDNPA Species Framework (focus on the 4B’s) • Improve national species monitoring programmes participation within the Park area by supporting groups and directly encouraging volunteers to take part through SDNPA recruitment. • Bees – undertake analysis for SDNP (reference Sussex Bees Atlas February’24) • Species abundance by habitat analysis project (flight interceptor traps by sample sites – number and diversity of invertebrates) | <p>CJ/JK</p> <p>CJ/JK/PS</p> <p>JK</p> <p>CJ</p> | |
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Projects

| Live | | Pipeline | |
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| SDNPA-led | Partner-led | SDNPA-led | Partner-led |
| Changing Chalk (Grazing & Dew Ponds) Ouse Valley Climate Action Fair Game | Changing Chalk (NT) Weald to Waves (Knepp) Big Chalk (PLs) Kingley Vale Protected Sites Strategy | Hedgerows River Rother Downs to Sea | Chalk Coast sNNR (NE) Seaford to Eastbourne Chalk Nature Recovery Project (NE) |



