

Explanatory Information for Risk Register

Likelihood Descriptor	Risk Scoring Guidance
Almost Certain (5)	The event is expected to occur in most circumstances.
Likely (4)	There is a strong possibility the event will occur.
Possible (3)	The event might occur at some time
Unlikely (2)	Not expected, but a slight possibility
Rare (1)	Highly unlikely. It could happen but probably never will

Severity Descriptor	Risk Scoring Guidance
Insignificant (1)	<p>Insignificant disruption to community services, including transport services and infrastructure.</p> <p>No disruption to service delivery, unlikely to cause complaint or instigate litigation.</p> <p>None or minimal financial burden (less than £5k) which can be resolved at local / department level, minor interruption to income generation, no permanent loss.</p> <p>Insignificant impact on environment.</p> <p>Organisation's reputation remains intact.</p>
Minor (2)	<p>Minor localised disruption to community services or infrastructure for less than 24 hours.</p> <p>Minor disruption to service delivery, complaint possible, litigation unlikely.</p> <p>Minimal financial burden or disruption to income generation (between £5k - £50k). Can be resolved at line manager / service manager level through usual budgetary measures.</p> <p>Minor impact on environment with no lasting effects.</p> <p>Minimal impact on organisation's reputation.</p>
Moderate (3)	<p>Localised disruption to infrastructure and community services, damage confined to a specific location or to a number of locations, but requires additional resources.</p> <p>Moderate disruption to service delivery, high potential for complaints, litigation possible, but not certain.</p> <p>Moderate financial burden (between £50k - £250k). Interruption to income generation lasting less than 14 days, majority of income recoverable but at additional cost.</p> <p>Limited impact on environment with short-term or long-term effects.</p> <p>Moderate impact on organisation's reputation.</p>

Severity Descriptor	Risk Scoring Guidance
Major (4)	<p>Requires support for local responders with external resources, significant damage that impacts on and means possible breakdown of some local community services.</p> <p>Significant disruption to service delivery service closure for 1-7 days, complaints expected, litigation expected.</p> <p>Major financial burden (between £250k - £500k). Can include significant extra clean up and recovery costs.</p> <p>Significant impact on environment with medium to long term effects.</p> <p>Major impact on organisation’s reputation / national adverse publicity.</p>
Catastrophic (5)	<p>Extensive damage to properties and built environment in affected areas. General & widespread displacement of people for prolonged duration. Community unable to function without significant support.</p> <p>Very significant disruption to service delivery service closure for more than 7 days or closure of multiple services, complaints certain, litigation certain.</p> <p>Very significant financial burden (greater than £500k). Extensive clean up and recovery costs.</p> <p>Serious long-term impact on environment and / or permanent change.</p> <p>Catastrophic impact on organisation’s reputation. International adverse publicity.</p>

SDNPA Risk Appetite Statement

The Authority seeks to operate within a relatively wide overall risk range.

One of the Authority’s key cultural values is that of innovation and the Authority seeks and encourages innovative approaches in the delivery of its purposes and duty wherever possible and appropriate. This includes being open to options and activities which may include some risk but are likely to result in better value for money in the delivery of its services. This is underpinned by a strong governance framework which ensures proper consideration of legal risks and delivery of effective decision making, oversight, and performance management.

Some of the Authority’s operations require a cautious approach to ensure a reliable service that engenders public trust and does not unduly risk the Authority’s reputation, for example, in the day-to-day delivery of its statutory planning service. However, the Authority remains open to innovative solutions and approaches which lead to significant benefits for the Authority and the public in the delivery of these services.

The Authority strives to ensure the best use of public funds and, therefore, takes a cautious approach in the general management of its finances whilst remaining alert to opportunities for efficiency savings, better value for money in service delivery, and opportunities for income generation.

The areas of lowest risk appetite for the Authority are in fulfilling its responsibilities to the personal safety and security of people. It is acknowledged that in some areas of delivery, such as at Seven Sisters Country Park, there are risks that are balanced with the delivery of activities and services to the public alongside the conservation and enhancement of nature and the landscape. Nevertheless, at all times the Authority will ensure a tight risk profile in relation to health and safety risks.

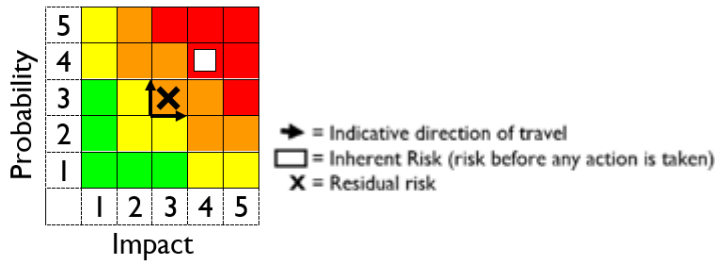
**South Downs National Park Authority
Corporate Risk Register**



Risk I.1: Staffing

Owner: Tim Slaney

The grid below highlights that the inherent risk is likely with a Major impact and after mitigations, it is scored as Possible with a Moderate impact. Perceived direction of travel is increasing.



Description of impact of risk:

Inability to attract/retain key staff impacts upon the organisation’s service delivery. High staff turnover results in inefficiency across the organisation. Lack of diversity within the organisation impacts ability to deliver on priorities and on reputation. Mental Health issues affect staff performance and delivery.

Mitigations:

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

Updates:

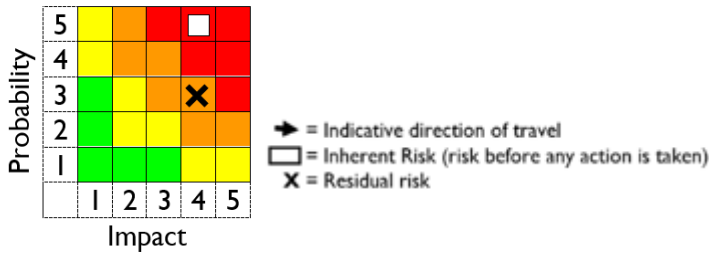
Inclusion of diversity in the risk description and corresponding increase in residual risk due to challenges in diversifying through recruitment and potential impacts on delivery, attracting funding and reputation from limited diversity.

Interim Director of Landscape & Strategy recruited and playing an active role in CPM and wider organisation. New CEO appointed.

Risk 2.1: Finance and Budgets

Owner: Tim Slaney

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



Description of impact of risk:

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

Mitigations:

1. Sufficient headroom within revenue budget and sufficient financial risk reserves to enable any shortfall to be managed in the short term whilst the medium term budget is adjusted.
2. Ongoing Income Generation activity to provide additional income which supports the activities of the Authority.
3. Thorough budget planning and profiling process undertaken with budget holders to support tighter financial information for the budget setting process with Members.
4. Effective and early scenario planning through Member workshops to redefine the medium-term financial planning process and approach to Budget setting, including strengthened alignment to the Corporate Plan.
5. Improved monthly revenue and capital budget monitoring undertaken by budget holders and OMT enabling identification of areas of potential underspend, overspend, compensating savings with subsequent action plan.
6. Industry and Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) indices used to model real world inflation implications through the medium term financial plan.
7. Procurement processes identify issues related to inflation and, where appropriate, changes to specifications etc. are made to manage impacts of inflation.
8. Opportunities for funding and/or private investment into the National Park continued to be explored which could result in potential cost recovery or mitigation for the Authority e.g. S106 and Nature Based Solutions Service.
9. Fixed costs, including staffing costs, are kept under review following transition to a new business model completed in 2023/24 with significant savings being realised and continually re-assessed.

Updates:

Revised budget planning and profiling process introduced with budget holders to support tighter financial information for budget setting process with Members.

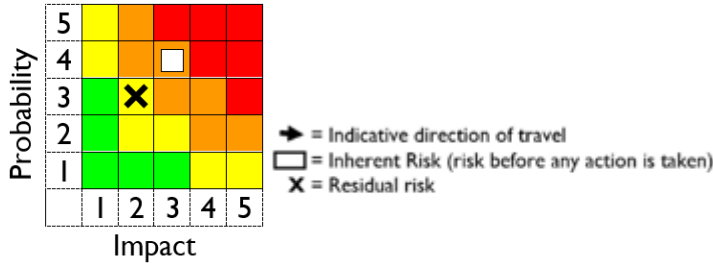
Budget impact of bringing the management of Seven Sisters Country Park in-house have been identified and will be tracked through budget monitoring reports to P&R Committee.

Employer National Insurance contribution increase impact on the Authority of £161k in 2025/26. This is being considered through the budget planning process.

Risk 2.2: Income Generation

Owner: Tim Slaney

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



Description of impact of risk:

Insufficient income generation opportunities are identified to support NPA budgets and delivery of priorities. Inability to meet expectations of Government in relation to income generation. Insufficient skills /experience “in house” to exploit potential income generating opportunities.

Mitigations:

1. Governance framework for consideration of SDNPA powers in relation to income generation activity developed.
2. Sufficient reserves held to enable recruitment of staff with necessary skill set if required.
3. Skilled income generation team operating well and meeting its targets.
4. Ongoing support for South Downs National Park Trust.
5. Nature Based Solutions Service promotes nature recovery on sites in the SDNP and provides the Authority with opportunities for cost recovery in the delivery of the service.
6. Reviewing future workstreams with a view to greater targeting of long term external grants and other income streams.
7. Income generated through delivery of the Planning Services, including through Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 agreements.
8. Opportunities for income generation at Seven Sisters Country Park being delivered for the benefit of the Country Park. Possible future opportunities being explored and form part of the annual operating plan.

Updates:

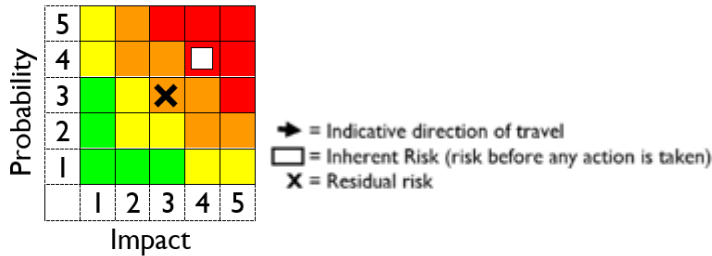
Revised pre-application planning fees applied from 1 October. Long term external grants being targeted with some success.

Impacts and opportunities of the management of Seven Sisters Country Park coming within the Authority are being monitored and are regularly reported to P&R Committee.

Risk 3.1: Health and Safety

Owner: Vicky Paterson

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



Description of impact of risk:

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

Mitigations:

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

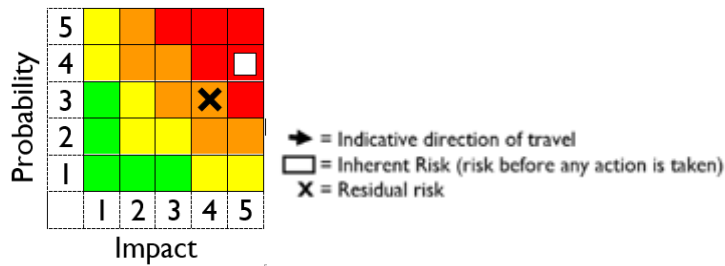
Updates:

Management of H&S at Seven Sisters Country Park further improved and streamlined with the management of operations now brought within the Authority.

Risk 3.2: Seven Sisters Country Park – Health and Safety

Owner: Tim Slaney

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



Description of impact of risk:

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

Mitigations:

1. External H&S consultant advice
2. Risk assessments undertaken for high risk activities (e.g. provision of food).
3. SSCP staff represented on H&S committee
4. H&S responsibilities agreed.
5. H&S elements included in induction programme for staff and volunteers.
6. H&S committee receives regular accident reporting.
7. Site audits undertaken.
8. SSCP issues included in regular reports to P&R Committee.
9. All risk assessments reviewed and updated.
10. Additional site specific H&S related training (e.g. food hygiene).
11. IOSH training completed by SSCP Park Manager.
12. Trained first aiders on site.
13. Park signage in place to support visitor movements.
14. Fencing and systems in place to manage livestock on site.
15. Participation in partnership groups (cliff safety partnership and liaison with emergency services).
16. Insurance arrangements in place.
17. Actively pursuing improvements to the road crossing with highways authority.

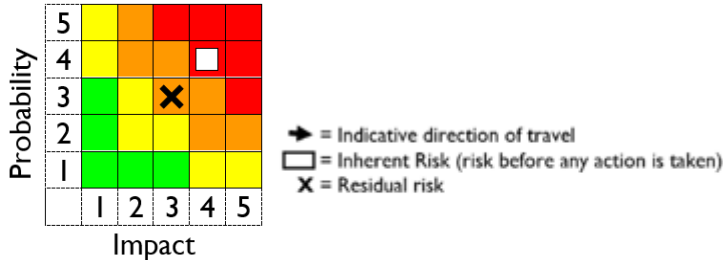
Updates:

Management of H&S at SSCP streamlined with the management of operations now brought within the Authority. Programme of fencing replacement being undertaken at Seven Sisters Country Park.

Risk 4.1: Seven Sisters Country Park – Asset ownership

Owner: Tim Slaney

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



Description of impact of risk:

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

Mitigations:

1. Insurance arrangements in place.
2. Operational risk register monitored by project team.
3. External land agent advice.
4. Maintenance programme in place for reed bed whilst long term solution implemented in liaison with the Environment Agency.
5. Regular survey of river assets.
6. Fencing and systems in place to manage livestock on site.
7. Close working with water level management board and environment agency to fully understand management options in relation to riparian ownership.
8. New Barn cottage and barns, security measures to prevent unlawful occupation. Long term plan to prevent degradation of asset.

Updates:

Replacement sewage treatment system being finalised.

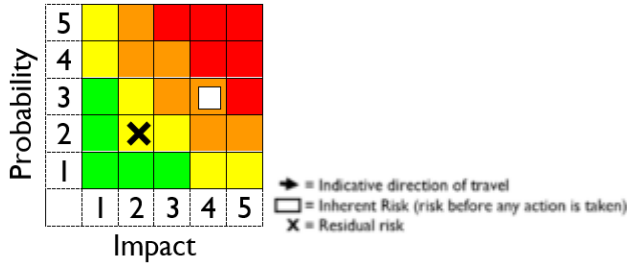
Management of SSCP within the Authority enabling better asset management through closer working relationships. Regular reporting through P&R Committee.

Programme of fencing replacement being undertaken at Seven Sisters Country Park.

Risk 5.1: Business Continuity Planning and Organisational Resilience

Owner: Richard Sandiford

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



Description of impact of risk:

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

Mitigations:

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

Updates:

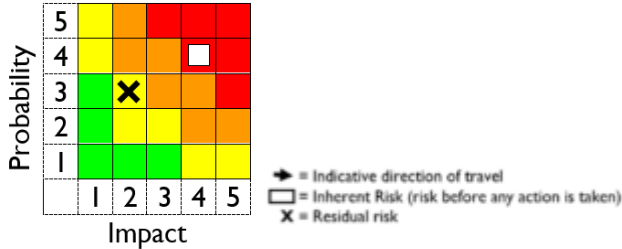
Thorough review of BCP to take place in Q4 24/25 which will include the integration of Seven Sisters Country Park BCP into the Authority's. BCP testing to be scheduled following review.

New Member of SLT has had BCP training.

Risk 7.1: Projects - External facing (Delivery and Reputation)

Owner: Tim Slaney

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



Description of impact of risk:

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

Mitigations:

1. 2020-25 PMP in place, new approach to budget setting embedded, review process for next PMP under development having regard to the new outcomes framework.
2. South Downs Partnership a key stakeholder supporting and informing the PMP Review.
3. Public affairs strategy and proactive comms: managing public expectations and setting out key messages to stakeholders and partners.
4. Project evaluation and lessons learnt reported to committee and used to inform future practice.
5. Development with the South Downs Trust of longer term and diversified streams of income.
6. Section 245 “seek to further” duty is a powerful tool supporting public bodies to take positive action in support of the National Park purposes and duty.

Updates:

Successful securing of funding opportunities supports external projects with partners.

Recently approved approach to the review of the PMP includes the use of specialist consultants to undertake engagement with partners to ensure a wide range of stakeholders are consulted to inform the next.

Revised remit for the South Downs Partnerships as the review of the PMP moves forward.