

The Protected Landscapes
of the London City Region

A 25 YEAR VISION



UNDER THREAT, OR NOT?

The London City region's projected population growth up to 2040 and beyond is astonishing, but we're not making any more land. How can the city region accommodate this growing population and build the houses and infrastructure needed whilst also respecting, preserving and enhancing the wonderful protected landscapes that are so central to the regions identity?

Who is even thinking about this issue at an appropriate scale?

We are...

We are the South East Protected Landscapes Group.

We want to contribute to debate on the growth of the London City Region in a positive and collaborative way. This is our 25 vision for the future of the Protected Landscapes of the London City Region.



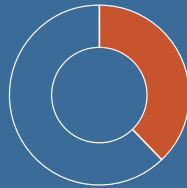
NOW, UNTIL 2042 A CHANGING REGION

2017**2042**

An increase of **8 million** more people over 25 years, the equivalent of 8 more Birmingham's

**12**

million people
in the London
City Region

**34%**

of South East
is Protected
Landscape

**20**

million people
in the London
City Region



The
Protected
Landscapes
become ever more
important



Homes

More homes required –
A million home
deficit



Energy / renewables

Increased energy demand,
more local renewable
generation



Water & drainage

A variety of water demand and
supply-side measures will be
required, along with the greening
of the urban environment
(Thames Tideway Tunnel)



Rail

More demand for public
transport (HS2 / Crossrail)



Airports

New transport hubs
(Heathrow expansion)



Circular economy

Greater reuse or
recycling of waste

WHAT AND WHERE?

Our National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are the most beautiful and cherished landscapes in the UK. London is surrounded by many Protected Landscapes, in total amounting to nearly 10,000km² – five times more than the Greater London built up area (1,740 km²). These landscapes are home to roughly 85,500 businesses, attract 150 million tourists each year and offer incredible environmental and aesthetic diversity. These landscapes are vitally important to the City Region as a whole.



These landscapes are home to roughly 85,500 businesses, attract 150 million tourists each year and offer incredible cultural, environmental and aesthetic diversity and value.





Limestone beech woodlands of the **Cotswolds**

Jurassic limestone



Chalk river valleys of the **North Wessex Downs**

Watership Down



Surrey Hills – One of the world's most popular areas for cycling

Cycling



Lowland heath of the **New Forest**

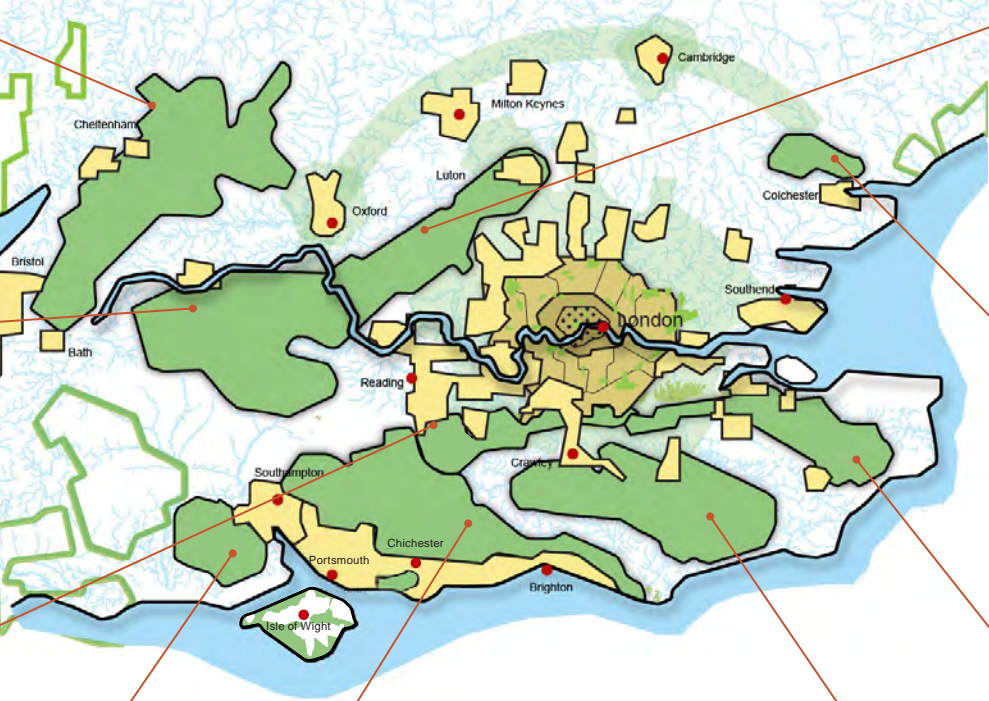
Ponies



4 market towns



The quintessentially southern English rolling hills of the **South Downs**



Chalk



Charming working landscape of the **Chilterns**

River Stour



Dedham Vale, only 80 miles from the City of London; inspired Constable and Gainsborough

Agriculture



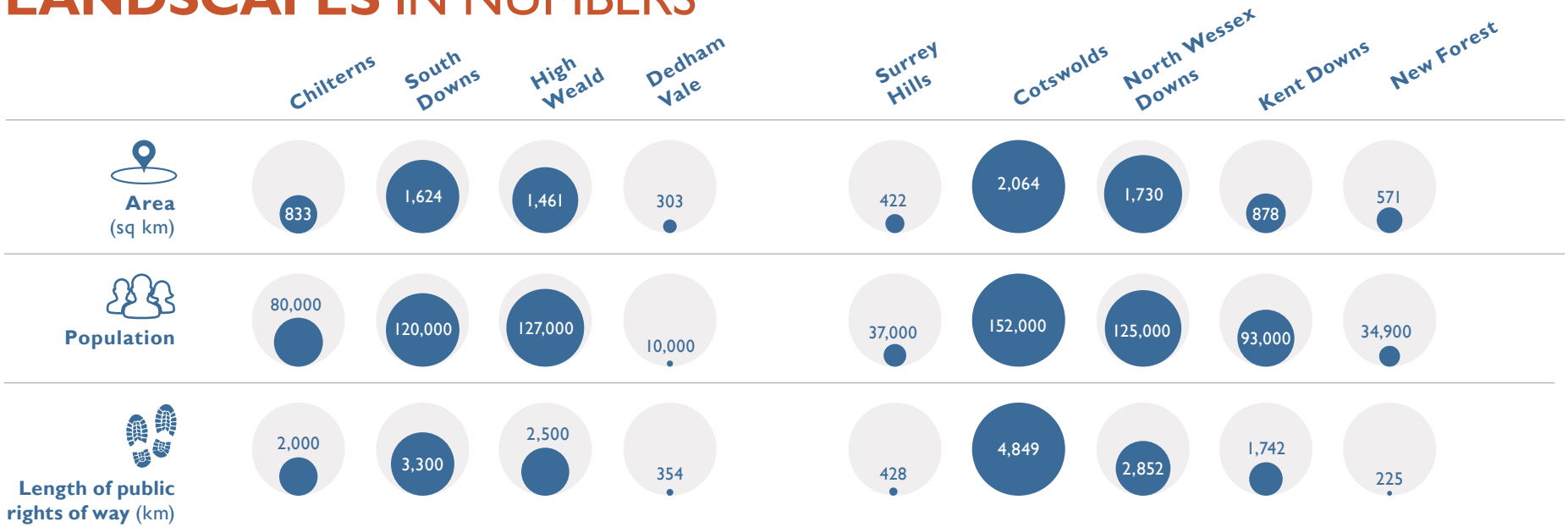
Kent Downs, enchanting dry valleys meeting the sea at the White Cliffs of Dover

Woodlands



High Weald – One of the best surviving medieval landscapes in Northern Europe

SOUTH EAST PROTECTED LANDSCAPES IN NUMBERS



9 protected landscapes

Over **10,000** sq kms
=
5x
the built up area of London (Greater London Authority)

Nearly **800,000** living within the protected landscapes – more than the population of Glasgow, the UK's third largest city


85,000 businesses


Over **150** million visitors per annum


Over **13,000** kms of public rights of way – equivalent of walking to New York and back again!


12,000,000 people already living in the London City Region


OUR VISION

London and the South East will be recognised and valued the world over as the World's Greenest City Region. The Protected Landscapes in the South East will be treasured for their distinct local character within an interconnected network of valuable green spaces stretching from central London right across the South East. A greater and more diverse proportion of the population will be mobilised and educated to enjoy, to care for and to value these natural environments and through these people proper voice will be given to the critical importance of these landscapes for the City Region as a whole.

WORLD'S GREENEST REGION



Our vision is underpinned by seven goals. We want to:

1

**CONSERVE THEIR
INTRINSIC VALUE**

2

**RECOGNISE THEIR
ECOSYSTEM VALUE**

3

**MAINTAIN
NATURAL BUFFERS**

4

**IMPROVE ACCESS
AND CONNECTIONS**

5

**PROMOTE
APPROPRIATE JOBS
AND INDUSTRY**

6

**SUPPORT PHYSICAL,
MENTAL HEALTH
AND WELLBEING**

7

**ENGAGE
STAKEHOLDERS,
WORK TOGETHER**



CONSERVE THEIR INTRINSIC VALUE



Conserve peace, tranquillity and character

The protected landscapes of the London City Region are some of England's finest landscapes. They are unique and precious as a result of their beauty and history alone, valued by people all over Britain and the rest of the world. We have a responsibility to conserve the value and character of these landscapes and ensure they retain their distinct charm, for the enjoyment of future generations.

2



RECOGNISE THEIR ECOSYSTEM VALUE



568mm



Annual average rainfall Dedham Vale AONB and the Stour Valley, some of the driest parts of the country (drier than Jerusalem)



75%



of Kent drinking water is provided by the aquifer underpinning the Kent Downs AONB.



1.2 million



are provided with drinking water from the Chalk Aquifer underpinning the South Downs National Park

Continuously improve understanding of the ecosystem service value

These landscapes play a critical role in the success of the London City Region through provision of essential ecosystem services. In many ways these landscapes act as lungs for the City Region, providing plentiful space for walking, cycling and a vast range of other outdoor pursuits.

They also serve to attenuate flooding and maintain water quality – 75% of Kent's water is provided by the aquifer beneath the Kent Downs AONB. They are productive producing food, drink and fuel, including the renowned South Downs sparkling wines. They assist in the regulation of air and water quality and provide habitat for a range of flora and fauna like the chalkhill blue butterfly and the Early Gentian, one of the UK's few endemic plants.

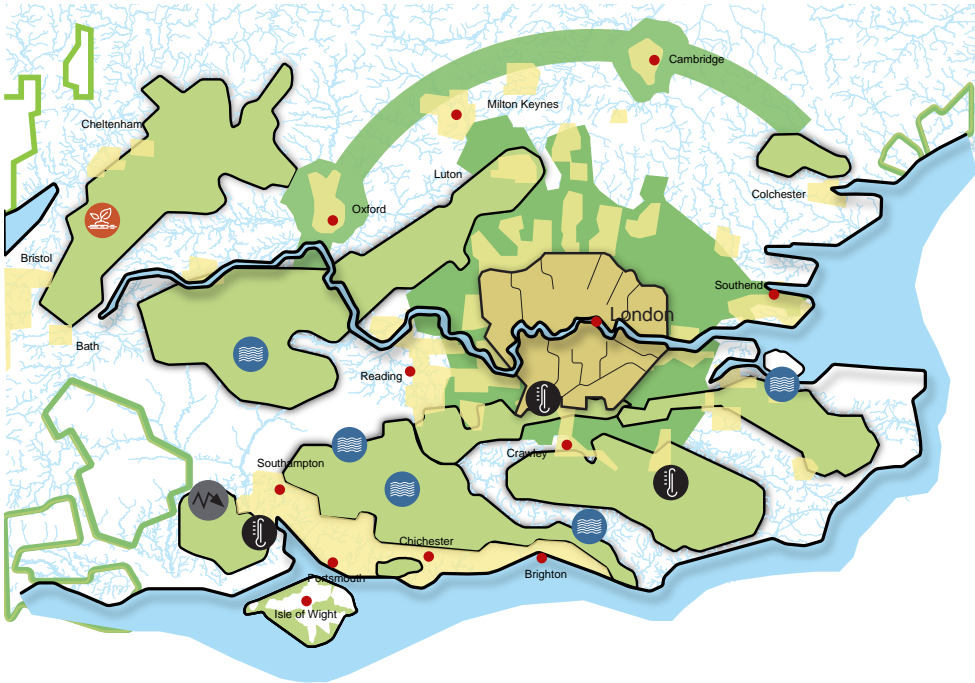
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MAINTAIN NATURAL BUFFERS

Hotter dryer summers and increased water scarcity in the face of climate change coupled with increased urbanisation will mean that the ecosystem services offered by our Protected Landscapes become even more critical. These landscapes act as vital buffers for flood protection, water catchment and quality regulation, cooling and for provision of food and fuel.

Promote the role of green spaces for climate resilience



Soil retention

Forested and vegetated land in the Protected Landscapes slows soil erosion and maintains low suspended sediment loads in rivers.



Temperature regulation

Rural Protected Landscapes provide an escape from urban heat island, which is likely to get worse as the climate warms.



Water retention

Water retained in aquifers in the Protected Landscapes attenuates flooding peaks and provides a reliable source of drinking water for the London City Region.



Greenhouse gas sinks

Heathland, woodland and soils in the Protected Landscapes are sinks for greenhouse gases.

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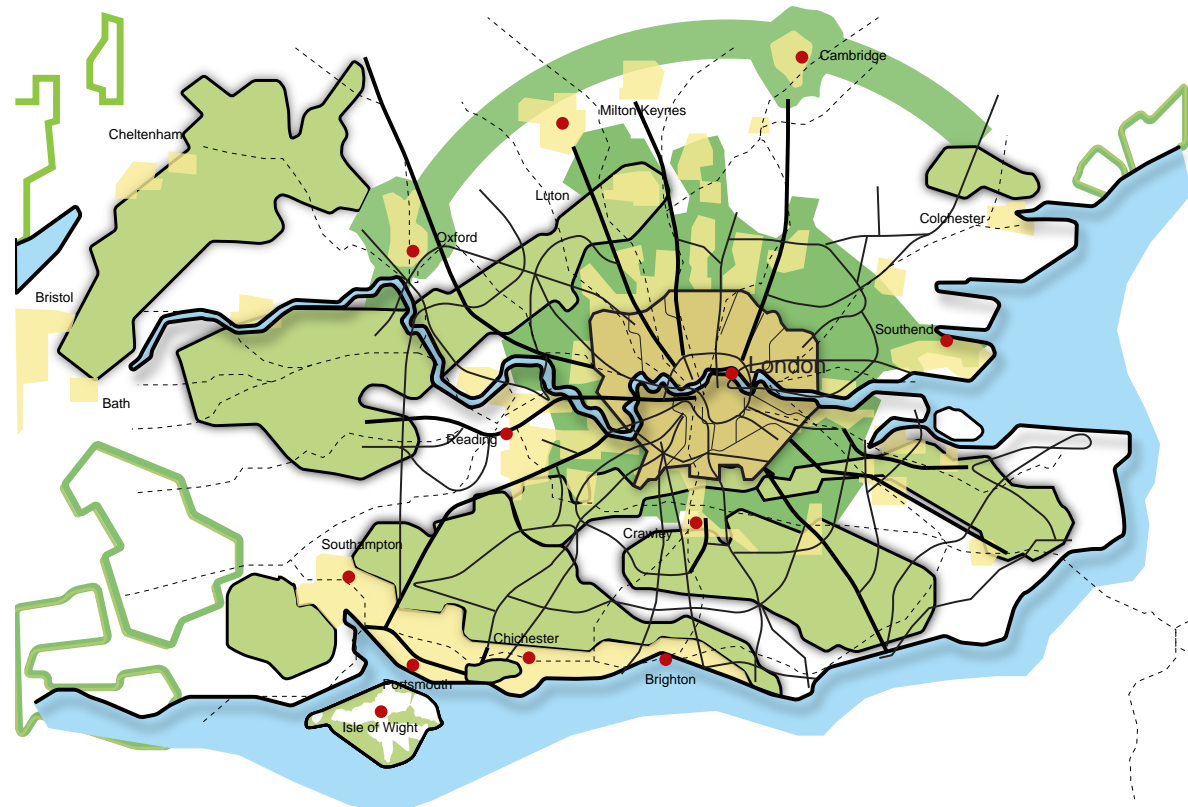


IMPROVE ACCESS AND CONNECTIONS

Increase demand for access to nature and meet the supply with improved and appropriate transport options

Many people – especially within the London City Region are becoming increasingly disconnected from nature. Further effort is needed to ensure that more people have the opportunity and ability to get joy and inspiration from the Protected Landscapes and to re-connect with nature in a meaningful way. These connections, and learning can be carried over to support better management of natural heritage in urban environments and more broadly to promote sustainable behaviours.

At a practical level new and improved transport infrastructure is needed to facilitate better connections. There are opportunities to improve access to landscape and also help to transport links around tube and rail stations across wider suburban London which could also help revitalise communities. Transport proposals however must be sensitive to the rural, remote nature of the Protected Landscapes that is so fundamental to their character.



5



PROMOTE
APPROPRIATE JOBS
AND INDUSTRY

The economies of the Protected Landscapes are an important and growing component of the London City Region’s own economy. At the same time, the dynamism and vitality of these economies is essential to the character and sense of place unique to the Protected Landscapes. We want to grow the contribution that rural economies make to the London City Region.



Grow and diversify rural economies



Wildflower meadows grown in the North Wessex Downs became a global talking point when they were used to create the colourful landscapes of the London 2012 Olympic Park. Established in 2003 near Overton in Hampshire, Wildflower Turf uses an innovative soil-less system to meet the demand for ready-made wildflower meadows without the establishment problems associated with traditional seeding methods. They can supply up to 100,000 m² of turf annually. Their wildflower turf can also be seen at Green Park tube station in London, on the roof of Peppa Pig World, and on the sets of all the Harry Potter films.



Within the Albury Estate, the natural flora and fauna of the Surrey Hills AONB was the inspiration for making a gin using the mythical waters of Silent Pool. After selling its first bottle in November 2014, the Silent Pool Distillery reached sales of 1500 bottles per-week within its first year. It is now sold throughout the region and exported to the Netherlands, Denmark, France and Italy.



HG Matthews Brickworks have manufactured hand-made bricks since 1923, using local clay and traditional firing processes. The bricks are used in conservation projects by the National Trust and others looking after the historic built environment. Matthews are a major buyer of wood in the Chilterns for both kiln drying and firing their bricks and have launched an initiative to plant new areas of broadleaved woodland in the AONB using a donation from sales of the bricks.

6

**SUPPORT PHYSICAL
AND MENTAL HEALTH
AND WELLBEING**

Promote the benefits of physical recreation, rest and relaxation and make available suitable places and spaces.



The London city region is an increasingly crowded, busy and stressful place. It suffers from poor air quality, with the highest concentrations of the pollutant Nitrogen Dioxide in Europe. Many people have demanding work regimes and a lack of connection with the outdoors. This can lead to sedentary and unhealthy lifestyles. Childhood obesity is also a higher risk in London than the average for the rest of England, based on a comparator with seven other English cities. The South East's Protected Landscapes have a vital role to play in providing a respite from city life. They can promote active, healthy lifestyles that improve people's health, wellbeing and life quality.

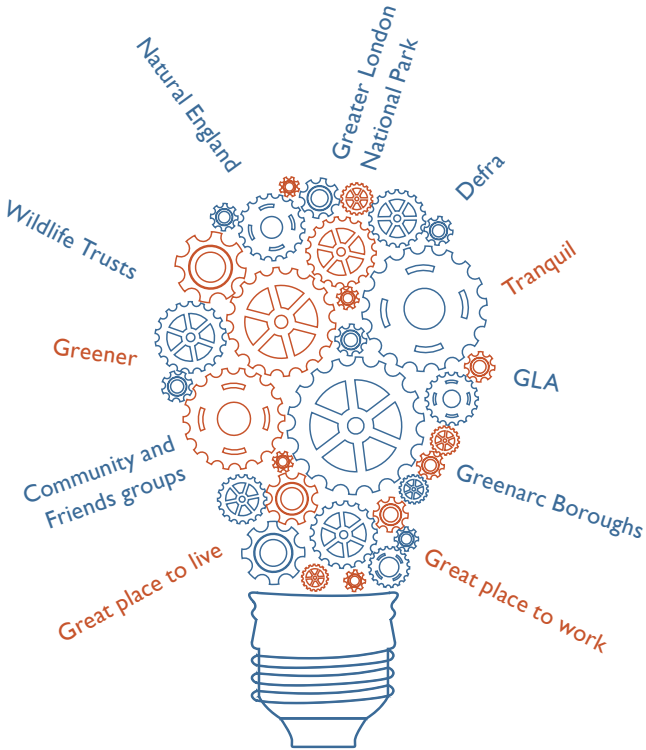
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ENGAGE
STAKEHOLDERS,
WORK TOGETHER

This is a shared agenda

So many stakeholders have a role in conserving, using, maintaining and enhancing landscapes and greenspaces in the London City Region and across the South East of England. We have to find better ways to collaborate, improve our evidence base, share skills and experiences, raise funds and drive efficiencies. The South East Protected Landscape Group is actively seeking to collaborate with others such as the GLA, Defra, Natural England, Greater London National Park, Wildlife Trusts, Local Authorities, Greenarc Boroughs and Community and Friends Groups to make the London City Region a greener, more tranquil and desirable place to live and work. We know we have some expertise worth sharing, in conservation and stewardship for example, but we also see lots of things we can learn from others. We need a clearer framework for positive collaboration.



THE WORLD'S GREENEST CITY REGION

The London City Region is globally pre-eminent, distinguished by its location, size and culture and by the dynamism of its economy. It is also known for the quality of its natural environment, the abundance of green spaces, and the beauty and scale of its surrounding Protected Landscapes. Competition amongst the world's global cities is increasing. Our natural environment can help set the London City Region apart internationally. What if London was to become the World's first National Park City? What if we started to build that story out not just for London but for the benefit of the whole City Region?

This movement would have inevitable knock on benefits – encouraging businesses, communities and individuals to behave in more sustainable ways, minimising energy and water use and reducing pollution through improved transport choices and limiting waste generation.



“Room to breathe”

