



## Surrey Hills National Landscape Board

6 December 2023

### Management Plan (2025 – 2030)

#### Purpose of the report:

To outline the programme for developing a new Management Plan for 2025 - 2030

#### Recommendations:

Members are asked to

1. Note the guidance for National Landscapes in England
2. Agree the outline programme for developing a new Management Plan for the Surrey Hills National Landscape

#### 1. Introduction

1.1 The statutory Management Plan is the primary document through which the purposes of the National Landscape can be achieved. It sets out the ambition, strategy, and guidance to achieve the purposes of the designation and, where possible in doing so, enhancing people's quality of life.

1.2 The current Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan has been adopted as a statutory document that sets out the vision and policy framework for the period 2020 to 2025. It has been adopted by all the constituent local authorities. A new Management Plan for the Surrey Hills National Landscape will need to be adopted for the period 2025 – 2030.

#### 2. Natural England Guidance

2.1 Natural England is in the process of producing guidance on the management planning process for Protected Landscapes; National Parks and National Landscapes, designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The guidance is non-statutory but will set out a framework for producing and delivering a consistent suite of statutory National Landscape Management Plans across England, noting that individual National Landscapes need to tailor their Management Plan review and management planning activity to suit the resources available and other local circumstances.

2.2 Producing the Management Plan is both an opportunity and an obligation for National Landscapes. Effective management planning enables those involved with the National Landscape to set the agenda for change and manage change effectively. 'Management planning' is how Plans are produced, reviewed, and delivered by

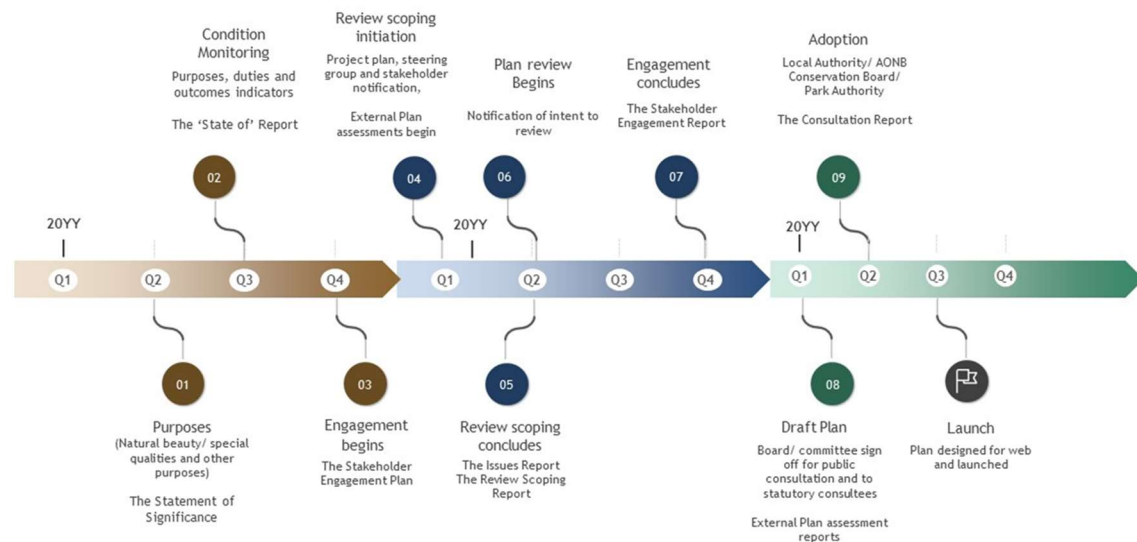
- bringing people together, build relationships and grow commitment
- building consensus around a vision for the future

- establishing a Management Plan around which joint action can happen and resources can be secured

2.3. The Management Plans will need to reflect the recommendations highlighted by the Landscapes Review.

- A requirement for new Management Plans to be spatial in their consideration of the Landscape, aligning with the new Local Nature Recovery Strategies
- Each Management Plan will need to identify targets for Nature, Climate, People and Place, aligning with a new Outcomes and Targets Framework
- Guidance will include Climate Change Adaptation Plans, which are now mandatory as set out in the Third National Adaptation Programme published in July.

2.4. The draft Natural England guidance sets out the following Management Plan process.



### 3. Surrey Hills Management Plan process

3.1 We are still awaiting NE guidance, but some of the proposed principles and activities in developing the Surrey Hills National Landscape Management Plan are:

- **Evidence.** An early stage will be to prepare the evidence base in a State of the Surrey Hills National Landscape report. Through the evidence gathering, there is an opportunity to consider using the platform created for the boundary review. This will be subject to costs and team capacity.
- **Historic research celebrating the 1949 Act and Surrey Hills designation.** 2024 is the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1949 National Park and Access to the Countryside Act. This was seminal post-war legislation, along with the 1946 NHS Act, which acknowledged the importance of safeguarding the countryside for the nation's health and well-being. This provides an opportunity to research what the Surrey Hills were like when the Surrey Hills was designated in the 1950s.
- **The Surrey Hills Jigsaw Project** will be 25 years old in 2025. This was a project working with all the parish councils and community groups that identified the special qualities of the Surrey Hills. Reviewing the Jigsaw Project is an opportunity to engage resident stakeholders to look back and consider again special qualities, what has changed – identifying where the natural beauty and special qualities are resilient and what is likely to change (and therefore needs to be monitored every 5 years) because of climate change etc

- **A 75-year vision.** After looking back at how the landscape has changed, to consider what it is like now, there is the opportunity to engage people to think what it will be like in the next 75 years, a 22<sup>nd</sup> Century vision (2025 – 2100). Opportunities are being researched with partners like Surrey University to use virtual reality 'metaverse' to help inform and visualise what the landscapes and habitats may look like in the future.
- **The Surrey Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).** The Surrey LNRS and Surrey Hills Management Plan (MP) will have a similar programme for engagement and adoption. The Nature section of the Management Plan will need to engage with the conservation bodies which supported the Surrey Hills Making Space for Nature strategy (species and habitat focused), and it would make sense that this aligned to the emerging Surrey LNRS and conversely that the LNRS provided the framework for the Surrey Hills Management Plan Nature section
- **A National Landscape collaborative approach.** There should be the opportunity to develop and share evidence and best practice as part of a National Landscape family, including working with National Park Authorities in the region.
- **Boundary Extension.** Depending on the Natural England boundary review process, it is proposed that the Management Plan considers the proposed Candidate Areas, which will be subject to confirmation from the Secretary of State. This may need to engage new local authorities.
- **Participative approach.** Working with representative bodies, a cohort of people will be engaged in thinking and challenging what the Surrey Hills will look like given climate change scenarios. This may include a range of site visits with expert advice considering climate change and implications for Nature, Place and People.

#### 4. Resources and Budget

4.1 The principle will be for the Surrey Hills Team and partners to integrate opportunities for convening project partners in also helping to develop the Management Plan. Additional budget and resources will need to be identified for the following elements:

- Consultation and engagement events
- Consultancy support, re evidence gathering and VR
- Web platforms
- Design, promotion and publication

#### 5. Outline Programme

Date	Activity	Action
Nov 23	Review guidance from Defra and NE	Team
Nov 23	Officers Working Group. Develop programme and agree budget, including local authority adoption	OWG

6 Dec 23	Surrey Hills Board. Agree scope of Management Plan, programme and budget	Board
Jan 24	Comms around 75 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of 1949 Act and National Landscapes (setting comms framework for the Plan) Develop brief for VR and metaverse creation with Surrey Uni Research on Surrey Hills in the past	Team
Feb	Prepare National Landscape consultation document, evidence base and engagement process. Commission, subject to funding. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consultancy support – evidence base</li> <li>- Platform (ArcGIS)</li> <li>- Design agency</li> </ul>	Team
6 March	Surrey Hills Board Progress Report	Board
March - April	Thematic workshops to identify Issues and Opportunities for each theme (Nature, People, Place and Climate). This will include looking at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- policy and strategy context</li> <li>- the delivery of Management Plan (2020 - 2025)</li> <li>- review evidence base, including citizen panel and citizen science</li> </ul>	Team
May	Launch engagement process. Looking back, now and projecting into the future. History of the Surrey Hills. Jigsaw project at Denbies – identifying what is resilient and changed in the landscape and looking ahead	Team
June - July	Public engagement / evidence collecting citizen science using the Platform. Citizen Panel – going out to key habitats with expert witnesses and considering climate change and implications for Nature, Place and People. Can choose specific habitats related to Making Space for Nature strategy with evidence of what it looked like, is now and what the future should hold. Create and test metaverse scenarios	Team, consultants and Expert partners
July August -	Write up Report of Engagement Process and draft Management Plan Undertake a scoping report to confirm whether a Sustainability Appraisal is required by Natural England	Team
Sept	Surrey Hills Board agrees Consultation Draft Management Plan	Board
Sept - Nov	Formal consultation on Draft Plan	Team
Nov	Surrey Hills Symposium – a 75 year vision for the Surrey Hills event	Team
Dec	Report of Consultation to be agreed by Surrey Hills Board	Board
Dec - Jan	Reports for Constituent Bodies on Management Plan adoption	Officers Working Group
Jan - Feb	Prepare Management Plan, including Executive Summary and web version	Team
March 25	Launch event	Board

