



Surrey Hills
National
Landscape

Item

Surrey Hills National Landscape Board

6th March 2024

Surrey Hills National Landscape Forward Plan 2024 - 2025

Purpose of the report:

To present the 2024 – 25 work plan priorities for the Surrey Hills Board

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

1. Members are asked to approve the work plan for 2024 - 25



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1. Introduction:

1.1 Although the fundamental purpose of the Management Plan will be to encourage co-ordinated action by all organisations, agencies and individuals, the Surrey Hills AONB Board has established a Surrey Hills group of organisations (the Surrey Hills Family) to help support the delivery of the AONB Management Plan's Vision:

The Surrey Hills is recognised as a national asset in which its natural and cultural assets are managed in an attractive landscape mosaic of farmland, woodland, heaths, downs, and commons. It provides opportunities for sustainable business enterprise and for all to enjoy and appreciate its natural beauty for their health and well-being.

1.2 This work plan highlights priorities for 2024 – 25 which deliver the adopted Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan (2020 – 2025) pillars:

Planning

Landscape Conservation and Enhancement; Access,

Enjoyment and Understanding

Growing the Surrey Hills Economy and

Advocacy, Partnership and Coordination.

1.3 The following Forward Plan identifies quarterly targets Q1 (April – June), Q2 (July September), Q3 (October – December), Q4 (Jan – March). The abbreviations are referenced in the Management Plan.



Pillar 1. PLANNING	Lead	Partners
Influence planning policy and decisions by advising on the preparation of Local Plans and developments affecting the Surrey Hills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advise local authorities on development proposals - Keep under review consultation protocol - Liaise with National Landscape colleagues to share and learn 	Ongoing	National Landscape Team
Provide pre-application advice on major schemes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - opportunity to generate income depending on capacity 	Ongoing	National Landscape Team
Boundary Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support Steering Group and Communications Plan 	Ongoing	Natural England
Pillar 2. LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT		
Environmental Land Management Schemes to ensure more, bigger and less fragmented areas for wildlife, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Defra has announced a new £5m FiPL Historic Building Restoration Grant for 24/25. This is in addition to the individual allocations for each PL. This is a national fund held by Defra to which PLs can bid for specific projects which meet the criteria - FiPL has agreed to fund a contribution to the Surrey Hills Society Projects & Volunteer Coordinator post. The role has been invaluable to helping deliver FiPL projects with farmers and landowners and has resulted in high levels of volunteer involvement in the programme 	Ongoing	National Landscape Team

SCC, B&Ds

SCC, B&Ds

National Landscape Team, SCC, B&Ds

FiPL Panel (CLA, NFU, NE, SCC, CPRE, SWT)



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project budget for 23/24 is £431k, of which £362 is allocated with applications still being received. - The project budget for 24/25 is £558k - There are opportunities for FiPL to contribute to wider projects in the Surrey Hills in 24/25, including Heathland Connections, Big Chalk, Care Farm pilot project, the Dorking Stage 2 bid to EA's Natural Flood Management programme and the Deer Management Strategy. 			
<p>Support the development and extension of Farm Clusters across the Surrey Hills,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seek to develop terms of reference for farmer led Clusters for Greenscapes, Greensands and the North Downs Groups 	Q4	National Landscapes Team	CLA, NFU, SCC, B&Ds, SWT, SHS
<p>Contribute to the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Local Nature Partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that Surrey Hills priorities are reflected in the LNRS and that Surrey Hills activities support the LNRS 	Q4	Surrey CC	Surrey LNP, B&Ds
<p>Heathland Connections Nature Recovery Strategy in SW Surrey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engage in strategy development. - Support and grow farm cluster. - Develop Heathland Connections website and promotional video on Surrey Hills web-platform 	Ongoing	Natural England	Project Partners,
<p>Big Chalk restoring calcareous (chalk and limestone) landscapes in southern England</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing strategic bid to NHLF, coordinating project bids from local partners and aligning with LNRS 	Q4	National Landscapes Association	Local and regional partners



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<p>Dorking Natural Flood Management (NFM) Stage 2 bid</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Submitted by SCC to EA Programme for programme to slow waters to reduce flooding and deliver environmental benefits.	Ongoing	Surrey CC, National Landscape	SE Rivers Trust. EA, FC, SWT, farmers and landowners
<p>Deer Management Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Develop a coordinated approach to the management of deer populations by increasing culling to reduce deer pressure particularly on Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, and explore opportunities to develop venison markets as high protein, high welfare super food to help deliver better health outcomes in Surrey.	Q4	FC, National Landscape, Enterprises	SCC, SWT, NT, farmers and landowners
<p>Surrey Hills Conservation Volunteers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Continuing to develop Conservation Volunteering programme which will include more FiPL funded hedgerow planting. Continuing to develop partnerships with schools, corporates and community groups and offer a range of conservation activities. Total of 6200 volunteering hours and ~70 volunteering events since Oct 2021.	Ongoing	Surrey Hills Society	FiPL, SWT, NT, Enterprises
<p>Surrey Hills Highways and Signage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The Surrey Hills team is supporting the commissioning and installation of 3 traditional finger posts for the Chipstead area, working with the Skills Mill charity.- There are proposals for new gateway signs with the new National Landscapes rebranding, some of which to replace missing signs and old signs in poor condition. There continues to be pressure to replace and maintain our Surrey Hills style finger posts. Budget and resource needs to be identified.	Q4 Ongoing	National Landscape Team National Landscape Team	SCC, Skills Mill SCC, parish councils



Pillar 3. ACCESS ENJOYMENT AND UNDERSTANDING			
<p>Promoting public understanding and enjoyment of the Surrey Hills as a National Landscape</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement National Landscapes re-branding - Develop and update surreyhills.org website - Develop My Surrey Hills video campaign 	Q4	National Landscapes Team	Surrey Hills Family
<p>Increase social media reach across a range on following platforms:</p> <p>F: 9,074, X: 6,747, I: 5,023 F:1,619, X: 4,446 F 562 X 747 I:1,831 I, 3,948</p>	Ongoing	National Landscape Enterprises Society Surrey Hills Arts	
<p>Surrey Hills Friends e-news 11,086</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 45% open rate (average benchmark for email open rates is 21.5%) 	Monthly	National Landscape Enterprises	Surrey Hills Family
<p>Google</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Over 15k review, rating 4.7/5. 6th highest review of 44 National Parks and National Landscapes - Need to update Banner to National Landscape 	Ongoing	National Landscape	National Association
<p>Defra Access for All Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Following successful delivery of the Access Fund in 22/23, Defra announced an unexpected opportunity in September for PLs to bid for a national 'pot' of £610k for access funds for projects in 23/24 - The Surrey Hills was awarded an additional £54k from this process 	Q4	National Landscape	Project partners, National Trust, Skills Mills



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Several projects have already been identified, including improved Project Partners, Skills Mill accessibility for the SH website, signage of the Cycle Surrey Hills network, Rail to Ramble and some follow up projects with the National Trust building on last year's works - The budget for 24/25 is unchanged (£231k) 			
<p>Growing Together</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - bid submitted to National Heritage Lottery Fund in partnership with SMEF, Surrey Choices, and the Coalition to diversify our visitor and volunteer profile and build confidence and skills and improve wellbeing in groups that may face barriers to accessing the countryside 	Subject to bid	Surrey Hills Society	NL Team, SMEF, Coalition, Surrey Choices, SWT, SCC
<p>Surrey Hills Care Farm Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Society is recruiting a Surrey Hills 'Care Farm' Coordinator to kickstart East Surrey Care Farm pilot, having been awarded funding by the Mental Health Investment Fund of SCC. 	Q4 - 2024	Surrey Hills Society	Growing Health Together, SCC, Surrey Heartlands, National Landscape, SH Arts
<p>Promoting sustainable countryside access to the Surrey Hills and volunteering opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promoted Routes Working Group - increase the number of promoted waymarked trails for Cycle Surrey Hills, Greenways, Equestrian and Rail to Ramble, developing Conservation Volunteer role to promote and maintain - Promote sustainable transport campaign with rail and bus operators - Mountain Bike Working Group – develop management policy and best practice for unauthorised (wild) mountain bike trails. The Group would like to pursue 	Q4 Q2, 2024 Q3, 4	National Landscape	Society, Community Rail, SCC, B&Ds, SCAF and access groups



<p>the recruitment of an access and wildlife area ranger to facilitate and coordinate activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Byways Working Group Management of Byways to reduce damage and enhance user experience developing campaign to report and prosecute damage 	Q3		
<p>Support the development and promotion of the North Downs Way National Trail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contribute to Partnership meetings and business planning - Support the Growing Routes NHLF project and promotion of NDW Ambassador scheme - Promote active travel and sustainable tourism campaigns 	Ongoing	North Downs Way NT Partnership	National Landscape, Society, Visit Surrey and Kent, Kent Downs
<p>Inspire and engage new audiences through the Surrey Hills Arts programme.</p> <p>Nature Calls.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Following successful Wonder Dusk (formally Harvest), major community art celebration of nature and landscape through workshops and at Box Hill on 16 Sept, now planning as part of Nature Calls, Arts Council England national programme to engage LB Croydon <p>Habitat Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Won the Guildford Design Award in November 2023. Develop project proposals with SCC Placemaking Team outside libraries in town centre locations. <p>Heathland Artworks</p>	<p>Q4 – 2024</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Surrey Hills Arts</p> <p>Surrey Hills Arts</p> <p>Surrey Hills Arts</p>	<p>NL Assoc, LB Croydon</p> <p>SCC Placemaking Team, B&Ds</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grow corporate membership and engagement to deliver environmental projects with the Surrey Hills Society - Mentoring and training programmes 			
<p>Deliver events programme for the public and member businesses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pop up markets at Cranleigh, Christmas Fair at West Horsley Place (Nov) and Frost Fair at Box Hill (Dec) - Wood Fair at Cranleigh (Sept) - Publish and distribute The Guide to the Surrey Hills 	Ongoing Q4	Surrey Hills Enterprises	National Landscape, business and charities
<p>Develop relationships and influence policy to secure investment opportunities that support the Surrey Hills purpose.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advise local authorities on Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund priorities and allocations. - Seek opportunities to align investment with FiPL, Historic Buildings and Access funding 	Ongoing	National Landscape	SCC, B&Ds, SH Enterprises
5. ADVOCACY, PARTNERSHIP AND COORDINATION			
<p>Ensure sound governance, reporting and monitoring of the Management Plan through quarterly meetings of the Surrey Hills Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quarterly reporting to Board - Annual report to DEFRA and partners 			
<p>Revised Constitution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developed brief for reviewing Surrey Hills governance as a National Landscape 		Defra, NE	National Landscape Association
<p>Business plan with agreed staff structure for National Landscape Team within SCC</p>	Q4	Surrey CC	Defra



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<p>Develop the Surrey Hills Trust Fund with the Community Foundation for Surrey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Review purpose and structure, potentially as an ESG Environment Fund- Seeking new Panel Chair and dedicated support	Q4 2024	Surrey Hills Family	Community Foundation for Surrey
<p>Promote the work of the Surrey Hills family</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Partnership Tour- Surrey Hills Symposium- Annual Report (Dec)	Q2 Q3 Q3	National Landscape	Surrey Hills Family, Surrey Hills Partnership
<p>Contribute to national policy, strategy and evidence base.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Active engagement in the National Association- Respond to National Association, Defra and NE requests.- Support Steering Group on National Landscapes branding	Ongoing	National Landscape	
<p>Keep under review the Management Plan (2020 – 2025) and develop a new Management Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Quarterly progress reports for National Landscape Board- Agree programme for new Management Plan at Board meetings	Ongoing	National Landscape	Local authorities