

Surrey Hills National Landscape Board

18 July 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

2. **Introduction:**

3. 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.

4. 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 | SCC, B&Ds |
| Support and promote opportunities to develop definition and understanding of the new Levelling Up Duty to further the purpose of the designation. Waiting for guidance to be published | Ongoing | National Landscapes Team | National Landscapes Assoc, Defra |
| Boundary Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support Steering Group and Communications Plan | Ongoing | Natural England | National Landscape Team, SCC, B&Ds |
| 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 | Ongoing | National Landscape Team | FiPL Panel (CLA, NFU, NE, SCC, CPRE, SWT) |



| | | | |
|---|---------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 - 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, Dorking Stage 2 Natural Flood Management programme Deer Management Strategy. Big Chalk, Care Farm pilot project, <p>5. Running two 'Equiculture' events in partnership with Surrey Wildlife Trust to offer free advice to horse owners about grass management and nutrition</p> | Q2 | National Landscape Team, SWT | |
| <p>Support the development and extension of Farm Clusters across the Surrey Hills,</p> <p>6. Seek to develop terms of reference for farmer-led Clusters for Greenscapes, West Surrey Greensands and the North Downs Groups and consider appointment of administrator</p> <p>7. Support Heathland Connections and Big Chalk landscape recovery programmes</p> <p>8. Issue quarterly Newsletters</p> | Ongoing | National Landscape 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"> - Align the LNRS and the new Surrey Hills Management Plan | Ongoing | Surrey CC | Surrey LNP, B&Ds |



| | | | |
|---|-------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that Surrey Hills priorities are reflected in the LNRS and that Surrey Hills activities support the LNRS | | | |
| <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 materials on Surrey Hills web-platform - Support development of Super NNR partnership and consider governance structure alongside Surrey Hills National Landscape - Support the development of a Heathland Hub at the Rural Life Centre | 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 - Support the 3-day conference in Winchester in September | Ongoing Q3 | National Landscapes Association | Local and regional partners |
| <p>Dorking Natural Flood Management (NFM) Stage 2 programme to slow waters to reduce flooding and deliver environmental benefits.</p> <p>Continue joint project with SCC Flood & Climate Resilience team for estate wide water management at West Horsley Place</p> | Ongoing | Surrey CC, National Landscape | SE Rivers Trust. EA, FC, SWT, farmers and landowners |
| <p>Deer Management Strategy. 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.</p> | Q1 - Q4 | FC, National Landscape, | SCC, SWT, NT, farmers and landowners |



| | | | |
|---|---------|--|---|
| Marisa Heath Chairing Task Group, seeking 1 year pilot programme supported through FiPL | | | |
| Surrey Hills Conservation Volunteers. 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. | Ongoing | Surrey Hills Society | FiPL, SWT, NT, Enterprises |
| Surrey Hills Highways and Signage With additional Defra capital funding, design and install new gateway signs with National Landscapes rebranding, some of which to replace missing signs and old signs in poor condition, working with SCC Youth Opps Down to Earth Team. | Q3 - 4 | National Landscape Team, SCC Highways and Youth Opps Service | B&Ds, parish councils |
| Pillar 3. ACCESS ENJOYMENT AND UNDERSTANDING | | | |
| Promoting public understanding and enjoyment of the Surrey Hills as a National Landscape <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement National Landscapes re-branding - Develop and update surreyhills.org website - Develop My Surrey Hills video campaign | Ongoing | National Landscapes Team | Surrey Hills Family |
| Increase social media reach across a range on following platforms. This will be supported by a new Social Media Marketing Assistant from August 2024 | Ongoing | National Landscape | Enterprises Society Surrey Hills Arts |
| Surrey Hills Friends e-news to provide a monthly update on Surrey Hills activity and to promote the work of the Surrey Hills family | Monthly | National Landscape Enterprises | Surrey Hills Family |



| | | | |
|---|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| | | | |
| <p>Google Over 15k review, rating 4.7/5. 6th highest review of 44 National Parks and National Landscapes Explore the potential to develop the platform and use of site statistics in profiling awareness and use of the National Landscape</p> | <p>Ongoing Q3</p> | <p>National Landscape</p> | <p>National Association</p> |
| <p>Defra Access for All Fund Following successful delivery of the Access Fund in 22/23 and 23/24, the budget for 24/25 is £235k. Sam Jones appointed as Access Lead to help promote and coordinate activity. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">9. Continuing the work with the Surrey Coalition of Disabled People on site reviews and the installation of appropriate improvements including benches10. The signing and improvement of Promoted Routes including Cycle Surrey Hills, Rail to Ramble, equestrian routes11. Improvements to Gateway sites including National Trust sites, RSPB Farnham Heath, Frensham Great Pond and Denbies | <p>Q1 - Q4</p> | <p>National Landscape</p> | <p>Project partners, National Trust, Skills Mills</p> |
| <p>Growing Together – Inclusion and Conservation in the Surrey Hills Surrey Hills Society has secured National Lottery Heritage Funding to work in partnership with SMEF, Surrey Choices, and Surrey Coalition of Disabled People 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</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> | <p>Surrey Hills Society</p> | <p>NL Team, SMEF, Coalition, Surrey Choices, SWT, SCC</p> |



| | | | |
|---|-----------------|--|---|
| <p>Project launched by NLHF Trustee Julian Glover at Denbies and India Davies appointed as Project Officer</p> | | | |
| <p>Generation Green - `Night Under the Stars' 12. As part of a national programme, the Surrey Hills National Landscape has secured circa £65k for 400 residentials and 200 farm or days visits for disadvantaged and challenged young people to experience the Surrey Hills.</p> | <p>Q 3- - 4</p> | <p>Surrey Hills National Landscape</p> | <p>Surrey Youth Opps, Active Surrey, YHA, Holmbury Hostel</p> |
| <p>Surrey Hills Care Farm Project 13. Katie Daw is the Surrey Hills 'Care Farm' Coordinator to undertake the East Surrey Care Farm pilot, with funding from the Mental Health Investment Fund to provide farm-based activities and research the impact to identify priority groups which can get the greatest health benefits.</p> | <p>Q1 – Q3</p> | <p>Surrey Hills Society</p> | <p>Growing Health Together, SCC, Surrey Heartlands, National Landscape, SH Arts</p> |
| <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 Biking – to work with landowners on identifying issues and develop policy and best practice for unauthorised (wild) mountain bike trails. Engage the mountain bike community through comms and enabling practical projects to manage trails in line with policy. | <p>Ongoing</p> | <p>National Landscape</p> | <p>Society, Community Rail, SCC, B&Ds, SCAF, Skill Mill and access groups</p> |

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Byways - to reduce damage and enhance user experience developing campaign to report and prosecute damage, as appropriate | | | |
| <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 Calling Following successful Wonder Dusk (formally Harvest) a major community art celebration of nature and landscape through workshop, now planning as part of Nature Calls, Arts Council England national programme to engage LB Croydon, specifically the New Addington community.</p> <p>Habitat Project Develop Arts Council England bid with SCC Placemaking Team and bid to Arts Council England outside libraries in town centre locations (Staines and Redhill).</p> <p>Heathland Artworks A trail of temporary site-responsive artworks at Farnham Heath. Delivered in partnership with RSPB and the University for Creative Arts (UCA) targeting emerging artists in the delivery and new audiences in the experience.</p> <p>Inspiring Views</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Q3 - 4</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, ACE</p> |



| | | | |
|--|----------------|---|--|
| <p>Develop, maintain and promote access to Inspiring Views. New leaflet being created</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> | <p>Surrey Hills Arts</p> | <p>RSPB, Uni of Creative Arts, NE NDW, Various landowners Surrey Hills Arts, Surrey Arch Society Surrey Hills Arts, Surrey Hills Trust Fund</p> |
| <p>Promote Dark Skies Organise moon and star gazing even held online in February. Considering nighttime photo competition later in the year</p> | <p>Q4</p> | <p>National Landscape, Guildford Astronomical Soc</p> | <p>SCC, Surrey Hills Society, SWT, Nat Society</p> |
| <p>4. GROWING THE SURREY HILLS ECONOMY</p> | | | |
| <p>Support the development of Surrey Hills Enterprises CIC to increase its membership and contribution to Surrey Hills purpose. - Members provide the visitor experiences for the Surrey Hills featured on website</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> | <p>Surrey Hills Enterprises</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"> - Publish and distribute The Guide to the Surrey Hills - Spring Festival was held in April at the Rural Life Museum - Wood Fair at Cranleigh (Sept) | Q1 Ongoing | 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, contributing to the Panel - 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 | Ongoing | Board | |
| <p>Revised Constitution as part of Management Plan Review</p> <p>Developed brief for reviewing Surrey Hills governance as a National Landscape</p> | Q3 | Defra, NE | National Landscape Association |
| <p>Business plan with agreed staff structure for National Landscape Team within SCC</p> | Q3 | Surrey CC | Board, Defra |



Surrey Hills National Landscape

| | | | |
|---|----------------------|---------------------|---|
| Develop the Surrey Hills Trust Fund with the Community Foundation for Surrey <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Review purpose and structure, potentially as an ESG Environment Fund- Seeking new Panel Chair and dedicated support | Q1, 2 | Surrey Hills Family | Community Foundation for Surrey |
| Promote the work of the Surrey Hills family <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Celebration event at Denbies- Partnership Tour- Surrey Hills Symposium- Annual Report | Q1 Q2 Q3 Q3 | National Landscape | Surrey Hills Family, Surrey Hills Partnership |
| Contribute to national policy, strategy and evidence base. <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Active engagement in the National Association- Respond to National Association, Defra and NE requests.- | Ongoing | National Landscape | |
| Keep under review the Management Plan Quarterly progress reports for National Landscape Board Agree programme for new Management Plan | Ongoing Q3 | National Landscape | Local authorities |