



Surrey Hills Board

The Surrey Hills Management Plan - A 75 year vision for a thriving National Landscape for people and nature

Purpose of the report:

To agree the programme for consultation and adoption of the Surrey Hills National Landscape Management Plan (2025 – 2030)

Recommendations:

Members are asked to agree the Management Plan Consultation draft and timetable for consultation and adoption.

1. Introduction

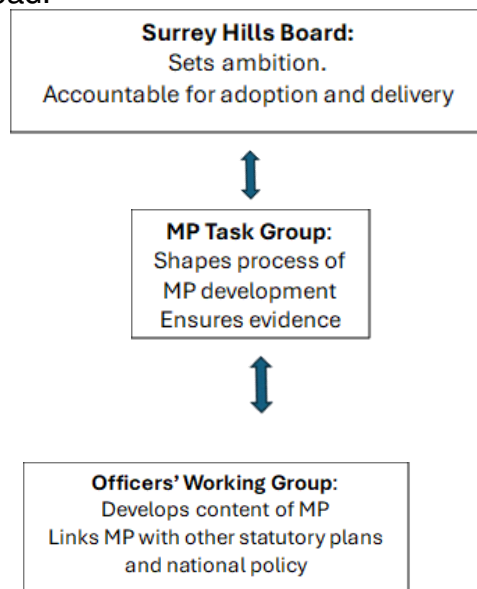
- 1.1 The statutory Management Plan is the primary document through which the purposes of the National Landscape can be achieved. It sets out the ambition, strategy, and guidance to achieve the purposes of the designation and enhancing people's quality of life.
- 1.2 The current Surrey Hills Management Plan has been adopted as a statutory document that sets out the vision and policy framework for the period 2020 to 2025. It was 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.
- 1.3 2024 was the 75 Anniversary of the 1949 National Park and Access to the Countryside Act. This presented an opportunity to look back at how the landscape has been protected and to consider a positive vision of what a thriving Surrey Hills landscape could be like in the next 75 years (2025 – 2100); a 22nd Century vision. This vision will be the basis for reviewing progress on the targets, priorities and policy framework every 5 years.
- 1.4 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

As Natural England is currently undertaking the boundary review process, it is proposed that the Management Plan is flexible in being a vision and policy framework for the Surrey Hills National Landscape and the Candidate Areas that may come into the designation. This is subject to confirmation from the Secretary of State and there will be a need to engage new local authorities and partners, as appropriate.

2. Surrey Hills Management Plan process

2.1 The outline programme for the Management Plan is set out in Appendix 1. The National Landscape Director has led a small and flexible task group to develop the new Management Plan reporting to the Surrey Hills Chair. This is supported by a consultant and the Surrey Hills Communications Lead. The process has engaged the SCC Greener Futures team, Chair of the Officers Working Group, Natural England, Surrey Wildlife Trust and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy Lead.



3. Preparing the Management Plan

3.1 The 75th Anniversary of the seminal 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act provided the inspiration for this Management Plan. It was an opportunity to consider how the landscape has been conserved and enhanced over the past 75 years and to consider the vision, principles and priorities for the Surrey Hills over the next 75 years, to the 22nd Century. In May 2024, a Postcards from the Future campaign was launched by Julian Glover, Chair of the 2019 Designated Landscapes Review. This campaign encouraged the public to describe the Surrey Hills as a thriving place for people and nature in a changing climate by 2100. Over 200 submissions were synthesised using AI to help create vision statements and to help identify the strategic priorities to deliver the vision. This was used to create an

online public survey that was launched in September 2024 which received over 1000 submissions identifying the pressures, appraising the vision statements and rating the priorities. Workshops were held in November with landowners and farmers, partner organisations and the Surrey Hills Planning Officers to consider the survey findings. This was used to inform the Consultation Management Plan.

3.2 The Surrey Hills Symposium, entitled Nature Calling, at Surrey University attended by 300 people was another opportunity to develop the 75-year vision for the Surrey Hills as a thriving place for people and nature. Contributions from the speakers, panellists and guests identified their respective visions, the barriers and priority actions. The performance artist Rosie May recited her poem, The Year Twenty-One Hundred, which was based on her appraisal of the Postcard campaign and will be featured in the Management Plan.

4. Programme for Consultation and Adoption

4.1 The latest Pre-consultation draft Management Plan will be sent out to the Board ahead of the 5th March following a final review with the Technical Working Group of planning officers on Friday 28th February. Its structure is:

- **Part 1. Introduction to National Landscapes.** This sets the scene regarding the 1949 Act, the National Landscape designation, the status of the Management Plan and the Core Principles at the heart of securing the long term vision.
- **Part 2. The Surrey Hills National Landscape.** This includes the Statement of Significance as to why the Surrey Hills is designated as a National Landscape, the pressures and threats, and the outstanding qualities that need to be conserved and enhanced.
- **Part 3. The 75-year Vision for the Surrey Hills.** This includes the vision statement for 2100 for Nature, People and Climate arising out of the Postcard from the Future engagement process. It includes an appraisal of the past, present and future to set out Targets for each theme and the proposed Strategic Priorities that need to be delivered over the next 75 years.
- **Part 4. The Policy Framework for 2025 – 2030.** This sets out the policy objectives as guidance to Responsible Bodies on how to seek to further the purpose of the designation, in line with the LURA 2023 duty.
- **Part 5. The Delivery Strategy.** This includes guidance to Responsible Bodies and sets out the role of the Surrey Hills Management Board, the Brand Strategy, monitoring and review of the Plan.

4.2 It is proposed that the Board provides feedback on the Management Plan by 12th March, and that the Board delegates to the Surrey Hills Chair and the Chair of the Planning Officers Working Group the sign off of the Consultation Management Plan.

4.3 A 10-week consultation will be launched from the third week in March until the end of May. The Consultation will be led by a proactive marketing campaign to ensure that a

wide range of audiences have the opportunity to input. This will investigate the opportunity to create Pledges (Joint Accords) which can demonstrate how partners will 'seek to further the purpose of the designation' in implementing the Plan, aligning to the new Levelling Up and Regeneration Act Duty. This exercise will include the following sectors for which key representative organisations are being identified:

- Landowners and farmers
- Young people
- Health and well-being sector
- Visitor economy
- Business
- Access

4.4 This period will include the production of a Strategic Environmental Assessment and a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to assess the impact that the Plan's Priorities and Policies would have on designated habitats, and an Equality Impact Assessment to ensure that no section of society is unduly disadvantaged.

Appendix 1. Summary of Engagement, Consultation and Adoption Programme

Activity	Content	Timescale
Management Plan Survey	Evidence and engagement 75 Vision Pressures and threats Priorities for Nature Priorities for People Priorities for Climate	October to November
Landowner and farmer workshop	Discuss issues and priorities	6 th November
Surrey Hills Symposium	A public forum to develop the 75-year vision, identifies the barriers and 5-year priorities	13 th November
Management Plan workshops	Review the survey and Management Plan policies	22 nd November
Planning Officers Working Group	Review policies and programme	29 th November
Surrey Hills Board	Agree the Consultation Management Plan arrangements	11 th December
Governance Review	Surrey Hills Board and Partners review governance arrangements for the National Landscape	Jan and Feb 2025
Management Plan Consultation	Agree process at Surrey Hills Board on 5 th March. Online-survey focused on vision and targets Targeting of Responsible Bodies, interest and amenity groups for consultation feedback	March to May
Management Plan adoption	Local authority roadshow Adoption by Local Authorities	June - July
Launch	Surrey Hills Board AGM, Surrey Hills Partnership, along with new Governance arrangements implemented	September