

Part 5. The Delivery Strategy



Surrey Hills
National
Landscape

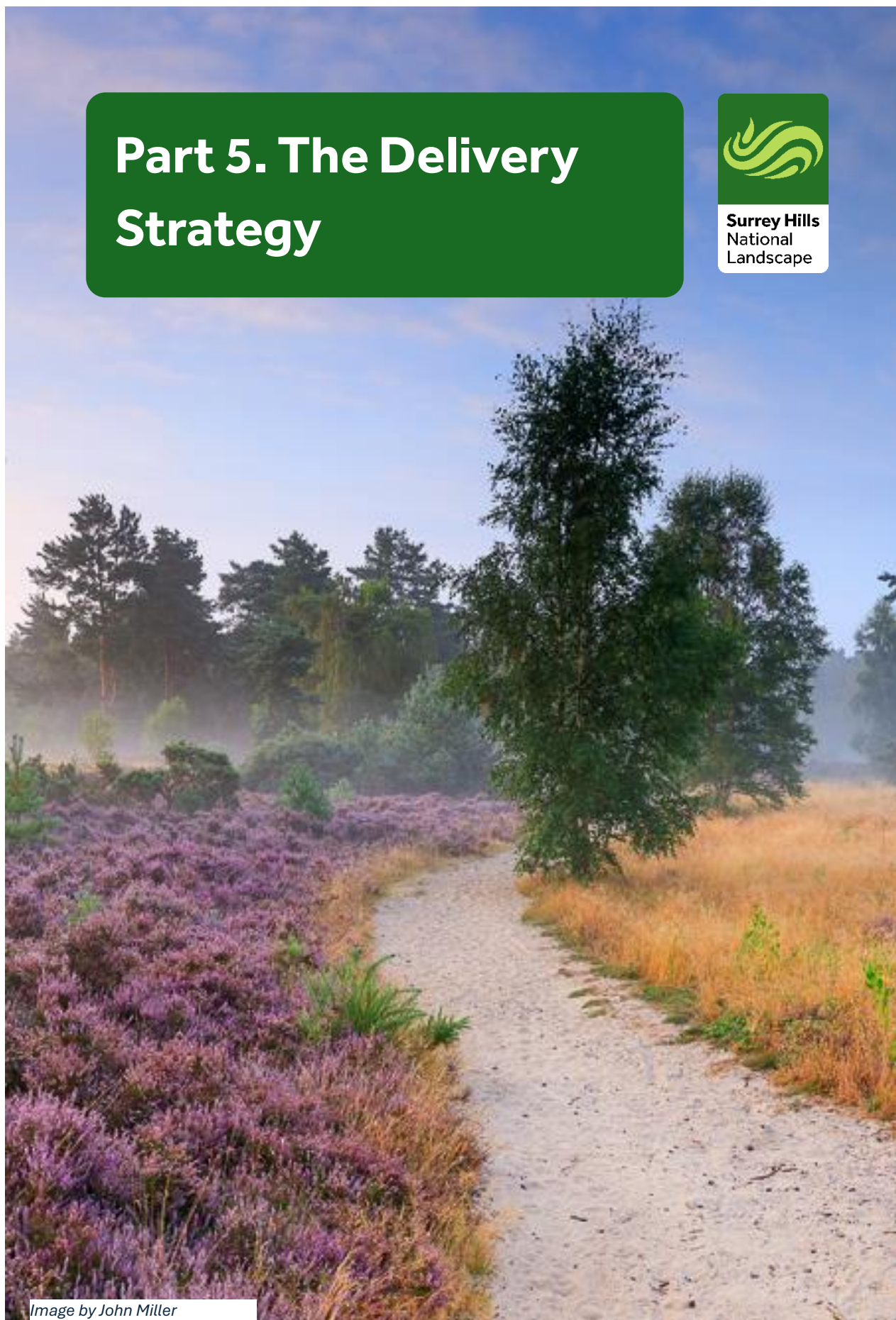


Image by John Miller

It is intended that the policies set out in Part 4 of the Management Plan will be embraced and acted upon by all those organisations that have a role to play in the management of the Surrey Hills landscape and the wellbeing of its local communities. This includes landowners, voluntary organisations, interest groups, local authorities, parish councils, statutory agencies, regional bodies and Government departments.

The following pages constitute formal guidance to the Responsible Bodies on how they should seek to deliver their duty to conserve and enhance the Surrey Hills, under Section 245 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 when carrying out their functions that impact on the National Landscape,.

A Surrey Hills Charter is set out for how wider society can actively embrace the vision for the Surrey Hills, which includes community groups, charities, residents, visitors and businesses.

The governance of the Surrey Hills National Landscape is outlined in its role of convening, enabling and supporting the delivery of the Management Plan. This includes how it holds Responsible Bodies to account to help deliver, monitor and review the Management Plan.

1. Delivery by Responsible Bodies.

The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act (LURA) 2023 places a duty on Responsible Bodies to seek to further the purpose of the designation when carrying out their functions which affect land in Protected Landscapes in England. This is a statutory duty, not discretionary, meaning that all relevant authorities must comply.

Responsible Bodies include all government departments, public bodies and statutory undertakers like water and electricity companies. In the context of planning, the duty requires a proactive approach and should be read alongside the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which stresses that "great weight" should be given to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty of National Landscapes. Importantly, natural beauty is not limited to visual aesthetics, it encompasses landform, geology, flora and fauna, and the rich history of human settlement. These relevant authorities include:

- Local Planning Authorities
- The Planning Inspectorate
- The Secretary of State
- Parish Councils preparing Neighbourhood Plans

Guidance issued by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs identifies that the duty is an active, rather than passive duty, which means that they should:

- take appropriate, reasonable, and proportionate steps to explore all measures which further the statutory purposes of Protected Landscapes
- seek to avoid harm to the natural beauty, special qualities, and key characteristics of Protected Landscapes outlined in Part 2 of this Plan, as far as is reasonably practical.
- For new developments and projects, should proactively embed in the design of plans and proposals, and where reasonably practical and operationally feasible, instigate a formal compliance monitoring and reporting system to ensure adherence to the duty

2. Delivery by Wider Society – A Surrey Hills Charter

The long-term vision for the Surrey Hills National Landscape as a thriving place for people and nature, will only be achieved if all community groups, residents, visitors and businesses help to take care of this nationally important landscape. The following principles and actions will be encouraged through campaigns and programmes:

Love Local

Buy local products and services from farmers and woodland managers who actively manage their land to benefit the environment. The landscape and wildlife value of the area's woodlands, hedges, meadows, heathlands and field margins are dependent on traditional management. Money invested in products and services that help support this management is money invested in conserving the National Landscape and its rural economy.

Take pride in the Surrey Hills as a National Landscape

Promote its special features and places to family, friends and visitors. Promoting what you find special about the Surrey Hills is the best way of encouraging commitment and action by others to the area.

Respect other users

Follow the Countryside Code. Through responsible behaviour we can all use and enjoy the countryside without damaging the enjoyment or livelihoods of others.

Love Dogs, Love Nature

Dog walking is a popular activity throughout the Surrey Hills and can have a major impact on wildlife, particularly ground nesting birds and farming. Please follow the Surrey Dog Code.

Reduce, reuse and recycle, and dispose of all litter responsibly.

Litter spoils enjoyment of the countryside for the majority of residents and can cause fatal harm to wildlife

Slow down for people, horses and wildlife.

Traffic spoils enjoyment of the Surrey Hills for residents and visitors. Speeding cars kill people, horses and wildlife, and ancient routeways and their rare plants are damaged by inconsiderate driving and parking.

Help prevent the spread of invasive and harmful plant and animal species.

Introduced plant, animal and aquatic species spread rapidly in the Surrey Hills countryside, competing with our native wildlife and leading to its loss.

Use less water

Demands for water lead to high levels of water extraction, damaging the wildlife of the National Landscape's streams, rivers and wet grasslands. Something about pollution/water quality?

Avoid using the car where possible and consider using renewable energy in your home.

Emissions from petrol and other non-renewable fossil fuels contribute to climate change and lead to degradation of valuable habitats and gradual loss of wildlife.

Have a say.

Your views can influence care of the area. Use consultation processes operating at parish, district, county and National Landscape level to steer policy and action that affects the area.

Get involved – support local conservation organisations

With financial and practical support, local conservation organisations can take action to care for the area such as monitoring threatened wildlife, undertaking practical conservation tasks, and lobbying government.

3. Delivery by Protected Landscapes Partnerships

The Surrey Hills National Landscape is part of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). It is a category 5 landscape as an internationally important place for nature, culture and heritage. In England, Defra supports the Protected Landscapes Partnership as a collaboration between organisations that work to protect and enhance the country's landscapes. The Partnership was established in response to the 2019 Landscapes Review. It is sponsored by Defra and includes the National Landscapes Association, National Parks England, National Trails UK, and Natural England. Its goals are:

- Nature recovery: working together to restore nature and biodiversity
- Improved public access: making landscapes more accessible to the public
- Support local leadership: help local partnerships work together on national issues.

3.1 The National Landscapes Association

The National Landscapes Association is a registered charity that supports the mission to conserve and enhance natural beauty in National Landscapes and other protected areas. Its aim is to support and develop a network of ambitious National Landscape teams and partnerships to have a strong collective voice and a positive impact on the places for which they care for on behalf of the nation.

The National Association led on the re-branding of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) as National Landscapes. In doing so it has registered the respective Landscapes logos as Trademarks under a family identity of National Landscapes. The Surrey Hills logo is used as part of building a brand and sense of place. This is a function of the Surrey Hills Executive Board, working collaboratively to build the brand and to diversify the resource base, including access to skills, funding and volunteering, with the following Surrey Hills organisations:

3.2 The Surrey Hills National Landscape Partnership

Surrey Hills Partnership is a Joint Advisory Committee which enables a wide range of partners to contribute to the delivery of the Management Plan and its Task Groups. The Partnership both advises on and scrutinises the work of the Surrey Hills National Landscape Board. Its activities provide an opportunity to share progress and good practice. It has an annual Forum which manages progress against the Management Plan and an annual summer Tour which showcases the work of the Team and partners.

The Membership includes:

- Local authorities with a responsibility for preparing and keeping under review the Management Plan and funding the National Landscape Team,
- Defra non-Departmental public bodies (Forestry Commission, Environment Agency and Natural England),
- Surrey Hills Family (Surrey Hills Society CIO, Surrey Hills Enterprises CIC, Surrey Hills Arts Partnership and the Surrey Hills Trust Fund (Community Foundation for Surrey)
- Advisory Partners that are willing and able to contribute to the aims of the Surrey Hills National Landscape by virtue of their financial resources, influence, expertise and commitment of time to support Task Groups.

3.3 The Surrey Hills National Landscape Board

The core decision-making body for the National Landscape is the Surrey Hills Executive Management Board, known as the Surrey Hills National Landscape Board. It focuses on the outcomes and strategy in the Management Plan and facilitates the joint delivery of the Plan, thus furthering the purposes of the National Landscape. The Surrey Hills Board has oversight of:

- Strategic development of the Management Plan, including establishing and reviewing the membership of the Partnership and Task Groups.
- A Business Plan, delivering relevant parts of the Management Plan and setting the priorities for the Surrey Hills National Landscape Team.
- Financial management, reporting and decision-making of a devolved budget, with delegation of financial decisions to the Surrey Hills Director, based on the host authority Standing Orders.

- Promotion and communication, including consistent use of the Surrey Hills brand, in line with the trademark licence agreement.

The Surrey Hills National Landscape Board membership is:

- Independent Chair, and Chair of Surrey Hills Trust Fund Panel
- Vice Chair – Accountable Body Local Authority Cabinet Member.
- The Surrey Hills National Landscape Director
- Accountable Authority Director, Chair of Planning Working Group
- Natural England (on behalf of Defra)
- Advocates for:
 - Nature
 - People and Place
 - Climate
- Chairs of Surrey Hills Family organisations:
 - Surrey Hills Enterprises Community Interest Company
 - Surrey Hills Arts Partnership
 - Surrey Hills Society CIC

3.4 The Surrey Hills National Landscape Brand and Surrey Hills Family

As part of the National Landscapes family branding, the Surrey Hills National Landscape has an emblem that has been protected for the purpose of enhancing the identity of the Surrey Hills as a National Landscape. The Surrey Hills Family are all licenced to use the Surrey Hills trademark consistent with the aim of:

“A thriving place for people and nature”

The Brand Values are:

- Share pure joy
- Nurture connection and community
- Safeguard and celebrate our natural world

These brand values will be reflected throughout all Surrey Hills activities to build understanding and to protect its reputation. The Surrey Hills brand will be used consistently by the Surrey Hills family of organisations:

- **Surrey Hills Enterprises:** a Community Interest Company that is building the Surrey Hills brand by growing the rural economy to support the work of enhancing Surrey Hills, its landscape and local communities. It organises events and offers membership to commercial and charity partners by sub-licensing the Trademark as an environmental accreditation to qualifying businesses to become ambassadors for the Surrey Hills.
- **Surrey Hills Society:** This charity is a membership organisation established to recruit and inform individuals with an interest in the Surrey Hills by running a range of walks, talks and projects which enhance the public's understanding and enjoyment of the Surrey Hills. The Society is supported by the Surrey Hills Board to raise funds to help deliver the Management Plan as part of the National Landscape team.
- **Surrey Hills Arts.** This is a Partnership Board hosted by Surrey County Council. It brings together Universities, arts, and heritage organisation to inspire and engage new audiences through a programme of arts events, installations and experiences to connect to the Surrey Hills as a National Landscape.
- **Surrey Hills Trust Fund,** this is a dedicated fund established under the umbrella of The Community Foundation for Surrey to attract donations from individuals and companies to ensure the continued success in implementing the aims of the Management Plan.

3.5 Surrey Hills Advocates and Task Groups

The Surrey Hills National Landscape Team will support the three Board Advocates which are responsible for the Outcomes and Targets:

- Nature - thriving plants and wildlife
- Climate - mitigating and adapting to climate change
- People and Place - enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment

The Advocates will encourage sector led collaboration and action planning with partners to help achieve relevant Management Plan priorities, bringing in knowledge and experience of the sector from a range of partners in Task Groups. The Advocates challenge relevant public bodies to fulfil their duty to further the purpose of the National Landscape, and report on progress towards delivery of the overall business plan.

3.6 Surrey Hills Planning Working Group.

The Surrey Hills Planning Working Group comprises of officers of the local authorities and the Defra Responsible Bodies that provide the Surrey Hills National Landscape Board with professional advice in relation to its terms of reference, work and activities. The Chair is a senior officer of the National Landscape Team host authority and line manager of the National Landscape Director.

3.7 The Surrey Hills National Landscape Team

The work of the Surrey Hills National Landscape Board is achieved through the Surrey Hills National Landscape Team, taking forward a range of initiatives to promote the special character of the Surrey Hills, establish partnerships, secure funding, ensure implementation and monitor effectiveness. As a nationally designated landscape, the core costs are funded by central government through DEFRA with a contribution from the respective local authorities which reflects their statutory responsibilities towards preparing and keeping under review the National Landscape Management Plan.

4. Surrey Hills Business Plan (2025 – 2030)

The Surrey Hills National Landscape Team will prepare a 5 -year business plan that sets out the key goals and priorities for the Surrey Hills National Landscape Board. It will reflect the Strategic Priorities identified in Part 3 of the Plan and drive the work programme for the Surrey Hills Team and the Partnership's Task Groups.

Given the current constraints on public funding, Defra is encouraging National Landscapes to improve their ability to secure additional, external funding. The Surrey Hills Team will work with partners to bid for the National Heritage Lottery Fund Landscapes Connections funding and review the Surrey Hills Trust Fund with the Community Foundation for Surrey. If successful, this would build the organisational capacity, with the aim to secure significant external funding to support the delivery of the Management Plan in the longer term.

5. Monitoring and Targets

The Surrey Hills National Landscape Board will take the lead in monitoring the implementation of the Plan. This will be achieved by establishing a monitoring mechanism for partners to report on the extent to which the Management Plan targets have been met

These targets are based on the Defra Protected Landscapes Outcome Framework derived from the Environmental Improvement Plan. They are based on an analysis of the environmental potential of the Surrey Hills to deliver them in alignment with the Special Qualities, Vision and Strategic Priorities set out in this Plan.

The Targets for the Surrey Hills National Landscape are:

Wildlife Rich Habitats (deciduous woodland, Heathland and Chalk Downland)

14,560 ha to 20,000 by 2100. 5-year Plan target of additional 1,000 ha

Trees Outside Woodland (under 5 ha, agroforestry and tree belts)

6.5% of land cover to 10% by 2100. 5-year Plan target of 50 ha

Hedgerows

6,900 km to 10,000 km by 2100. 5-year Plan target of 20km

Protected sites (SSSIs)

75% in Favourable Condition to 95%. 5-year target 80%

National Heritage at Risk

From 8 to 2 by 2100. 5-year target 4.

Further targets to be developed as part of Consultation and engagement process.

Climate mitigation and adaptation

Net Zero by 2050 (national target) -0.5 by 2075, -1.0 by 2100

Details to be determined by the Climate Change Action Plan in 2028.

Fixed Point Surveys

Fixed point survey points will be identified at various locations that span the Surrey Hills. These will monitor the landscape changes over the 75-year period and changes in the landscape will be formally reviewed every 5 years as part of the Management Plan review.