



Surrey Hills National Landscape Board

17th September 2025

Annual Governance, Finance, and Management Plan Monitoring Report

Purpose of the report:

To note governance actions and the outturn reports and agree the estimates.
To note and advise on the Management Plan Report, the Access for All and Capital Uplift programmes.

Recommendations:

1. Note the Outturn Reports for 2023/24 and 2024/25 (Annex 1), the Estimates for 2025/26 and for 2026/27 (Annex 2).
2. Note the Governance Review proposals, subject to Surrey County Council Legal advice.
3. Note the scoring and sign off for the Access for All Programme (Annex 4)
4. Note the proposed investment for the Defra Capital Uplift Programme (Annex 5)
5. Approve the Risk Register (Annex 6) and note the actions arising
6. Note and advise on the Surrey Hills Management Plan (2020 – 2025) Monitoring Framework
7. Note the progress with the adoption and launch of the new Management Plan (2025 – 2030) – A 75 Year Vision for a Thriving National Landscape for People, Nature and the Climate.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Surrey Hills National Landscape is one of 34 designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England that are primarily sponsored by Defra along with the nation's 10 National Park Authorities. Following the Glover Review of Designated Landscapes, Defra published its vision for National Parks and National Landscapes is:

'A coherent national network of beautiful, nature-rich spaces that all parts of society can easily access and enjoy. National Landscapes support nature recovery and thriving local communities and economies, improve our public health and wellbeing, drive forward nature recovery, and build our resilience to climate change.'

1.2 Defra has set up various working groups including securing private sector investment, advice on Management Plans and governance. It has protected the core funding and provided additional funding to National Parks and National Landscapes through Farming in Protected Landscapes and Access for All programmes. In 2025/2026, Defra has awarded the Surrey Hills National Landscape an additional circa £1.2m above the revenue grant (£217k) for FiPL £585k, Access for All £380k and Capital Uplift £265k. This has placed a great strain on a small team to programme this work along with delivering the other programmes and the priority of developing the new Management Plan. This has implications for the governance, structure and business plans for the respective areas which are set out in this report.

1.3 The uncertainty created by the pressure on Defra and local authority finances means that budgets and staffing need to be reviewed and agreed annually. The possible extension of the Surrey Hills boundary will affect the Defra and local authority funding from 2026 onwards.

2. Governance Review

2.1 The Surrey Hills National Landscape Board's current constitution as a Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) was agreed in October 2013. Although various changes to the Constitution have been reported to AGMs over the years, there has been no formal review. The Board did set up a Working Group in 2021, but this was effectively put on hold pending Defra's response to the Glover recommendations on designated landscapes. Proposal 26 of this called for reformed governance to inspire and secure ambition in our national landscapes and to better reflect society, proposing an overhaul of how AONB Partnerships should be governed as new National Landscapes.

2.2 At its AGM in 2025, the Board agreed to set up a steering group and commissioned Resources for Change to undertake the Governance Review engaging the Board, the Officers Working Group, Natural England, other National Landscapes, the Defra team and Julian Glover. The report was presented and discussed by the Board throughout 2025.

2.3 Surrey County Council is providing the detailed Legal advice which will be reported under the next agenda item. The proposal is to retain the JAC structure, to be referred to as the Surrey Hills Partnership Board. It is proposed to have extended membership and to meet twice a year. Within the new structure, there is a proposed Executive Management Group (EMG) meeting quarterly. The Review also highlighted the need to undertake more secretariat functions with a new Executive Assistant to support the National Landscape Team, the proposed Advocates and associated task groups.

3. Finance – Outturn and Estimates

3.1 Outturn reports. The 2023/24 and the 2024/25 outturn reports are set out in Annex 1. The staff overspend in 23/24 is a result of Surrey County Council Business Support costs coming out of the AONB cost centre. As this time was only partly used for Surrey Hills work, SCC met this cost and there was no drawdown from reserves. The discrepancy between the

estimates and outturn for 2024/25 is due to unexpected Defra Uplift in-year funding, both Revenue and Capital. This was part of an additional £10m for the 10 National Parks (£5m) and the 34 National Landscapes (£5m). For the Surrey Hills this was used on a project manager for the Access for All funding, access projects and an allocation to commissioning the new Surrey Hills signs. The SCC S.151 Officer however recoded this under the generic headings of Staffing and Support Services.

3.2 The Estimates are set out in Annex 2. In the current FY 2025/26, Defra has in-year awarded funding for Access for All (£380k) and a Capital Uplift (£265k). These are restricted as capital programmes, and the Surrey Hills National Landscape team has been working closely with Defra colleagues, other National Landscapes and Surrey partners to plan the investment. These are considered within this report.

3.3 The Estimates for 2026/27 propose an increase in borough and district contributions towards the core budget. Defra core grant requires 75% match from the local authorities. In recent years the increase in local authority funding to match Defra has used Surrey County Council Arts funding to support the Surrey Hills Arts programme. However, the Governance Review highlights that half of the local authority match funding (12.5%) should come from the boroughs and districts. This has not kept pace with the Defra contribution, and we will potentially lose Defra core funding unless it can be matched. The increase in borough and district contributions will be used to fund an Executive Assistant role to build capacity within the team to deliver the Capital Programme as well as the core work. This will also reduce the burden on SCC business support.

3.4 The potential impact of Local Government Reorganisation and extension of the Surrey Hills National Landscape will necessitate a review of the funding formula post 2027.

4. Surrey Hills Management Plan (2020 – 2025) Monitoring Framework

4.1 The Board receives quarterly updates on the delivery of the Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan (2020 – 2025) under the following pillars:

- Planning
- Landscape Conservation and Enhancement
- Access, Enjoyment and Understanding
- Growing the Surrey Hills Economy
- Advocacy, Partnership and Coordination

4.2 The framework identifies the following:

Landscape Conservation and Enhancement

- Delivered the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme and developed a network of farm contacts with regular newsletters

- Supported Natural England and partners to deliver Heathland Connections, the Regional Nature Recovery Project, and the new designation as the Wealden Heath National Nature Reserve
- Extended the Surrey Hills Society's Conservation Volunteer programme to support the delivery of FiPL and Access for All projects under Project Acorn (see capital uplift)
- Care Farm pilot project delivered through the Surrey Hills Society with farm partners, to be developed as a Farm Prescription programme.
- Supported the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, the Surrey Nature Partnership to integrate the Surrey Hills Making Space for Nature Strategy and Management Plan
- Supported the development of the Big Chalk ambition to protect and enhance chalk landscapes across southern England

Access, Enjoyment and Understanding

- Delivered the Defra Access for All programme supporting a wide range of people to sustainable access and to enjoy the Surrey Hills, linking in with travel campaigns.
- Extending the Rail to Ramble, equestrian and Cycle Surrey Hills promoted routes with website storyboards, posters and waymarking
- Ensured the delivery of the National Lottery Heritage Fund 'Growing Together' project with the Surrey Hills Society and the Putting Down Routes project with the North Downs Way National Trail.
- Delivered a wide-ranging Surrey Hills Arts programme to inspire and engage new audiences, including Nature Calling, a national arts and landscape programme, funded by Arts Council England and Defra, that was launched at Box Hill in July.
- Delivering a pilot Care Farm programme with the Surrey Hills Society and funding from the Mental Health Investment Fund to measure health impacts, to support the viability of farms and to evaluate impact and to consider scaling up.

Growing the Surrey Hills Economy

- Increased the membership of Surrey Hills Enterprise CIC, member services and the promotion of the Surrey Hills Trademark Award. At circa 240 members
- Surrey Hills Enterprises delivered large scale public events (Surrey Hills Spring Festival, Surrey Hills Artisan Festival, Surrey Hills Country Fair, a new collaboration with Merrist Wood College, and the Surrey Hills Wood Fair in September) and developed the artisan markets and smaller events.

- Developing corporate membership programme to include the delivery of environmental projects to conserve and enhance the Surrey Hills, and work with the National Landscapes Association on Green Financing.
- Team played an active part in the delivering the English Rural Shared Prosperity Fund including chairing the Local Panel.

Advocacy, Partnership and Coordination

- Increased awareness of the Surrey Hills National Landscape with development of website, e-newsletter now sent to circa 15,000 addresses and combined Instagram and Facebook with over 30,000 followers.
- Undertaken a governance review of the Surrey Hills AONB Board resulting in a new proposed structure for a Surrey Hills National Landscape Board, subject to host authority Legal advice
- Prepared a 75-year vision for the National Landscape and a new Surrey Hills Management Plan (2025- 2030) for local authority adoption in 2025. To be adopted and published at the Surrey Hills Symposium at Surrey University on 19th November.
- Developing opportunities for external funding including the development of the Surrey Hills Project for the £150m NLHF Landscapes Connections programme.
- Co-hosted the NLA Conference in July 2025 including the field trips.
- Promotion of the Surrey Hills as a National Landscape through comms activities including the design, commission and installation of new Corten steel highway signs.

5. Surrey Hills Management Plan (2025 – 2030)

5.1 The new Management Plan has been through a process of engagement to develop the 75-year vision and priorities under the themes of Nature, People and Place and Climate. This was followed by a consultation draft and the commission of the Environment Report, Habitat Regulations Assessment and an Equalities Impact Assessment. The Environment Report highlights the need for further work on the Climate adaptation and mitigation impacts on landscape. Developing the Climate Action Plan is a Defra requirement and will be a priority over the next couple of years. This will be part of the new Business Plan, to be based on the 3 themes and strategic priorities which will be developed by the proposed new Executive Management Group and presented to the new Partnership Board for approval.

5.2 The Management Plan (2025 – 2030) is currently going through a process of adoption by the respective local authorities. It is planned to be launched at the Surrey Hills Symposium on 19th November at Surrey University. The

published version will include a public facing summary and an executive summary with the full policy framework that will guide Responsible Bodies in how to meet their new duties under LURA, to seek to further the purpose of the Surrey Hills as a National Landscape.

6. Access for All Programme

6.1 The Surrey Hills National Landscape was awarded at the end of July 2025, a £380k capital programme to enhance access to the Surrey Hills by improving facilities, removing barriers, providing better information and helping to reduce impacts on farming and nature. This programme funding must be completed and claimed for by March 2026 which puts a great challenge on the team and partners to co-design and co-deliver projects. Annex 4 sets out the criteria and the scoring process for all the projects.

7. Capital Uplift

7.1 Defra has provided the Surrey Hills National Landscape with an additional £280k Capital Uplift programme. This is a delegated fund to the Surrey Hills National Landscapes team. There are very broad criteria for projects to deliver on 30x30, invest to save, and innovation for Nature, People, Place and Climate outcomes. These outcomes are aligned with the Access for All and the Farming in Protected Landscapes programmes, which provides an opportunity for the team to manage a portfolio of projects with partners. Again, all the funds need to be spent and claimed for by March 2026.

7.2 Annex 5 sets out a series of projects that have been reported to Defra. They are all being developed by the team with local partners, based on advice from Defra and colleagues in other National Landscapes.

8. Risk Register

8.1 The Risk Register (Annex 6) is reviewed annually by the National Landscape Director and reported annually to the National Landscapes Board. It highlights what actions need to be undertaken to mitigate risks. Most of the scoring is Green, which means that this should be subject to annual review, but there are also red and amber areas for which the following actions are proposed to mitigate the risk:

8.2 The ongoing main issue is that there is no confirmation of the Defra Core funding for National Landscapes or the capital programmes beyond March 2026. This year-on-year funding is an issue common to all the National Landscape partnerships and National Park Authorities. There is the possibility of an indicative 3-year core funding commitment, but Defra has indicated that capital funding will always be confirmed in-year. The issue is common to local authority budget settings and does demonstrate the importance of maintaining good working relationships with the host authority.

8.3 The uncertainty around funding also means that it is difficult to staff resource a team that is required to help deliver the Capital programmes. This is particularly acute for the Surrey Hills National Landscape which has a disproportionately high level of FiPL, Access for All and Capital Uplift funding.

8.4 The contribution from local authorities to match fund 25% of the Defra core grant is also a significant concern and will need to be addressed through the new Governance structure, and bearing in mind the impact of devolution, local government reorganisation and the extension to the Surrey Hills National Landscape boundary.

Annex 1. OUTURN REPORTS

SURREY HILLS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE (CORE) - OUTTURN REPORT FOR 2023-2024

	Estimate 2023/2024 £	Outturn 2023/2024 £
Core staff costs	238,000	256,000
Premises costs	8,000	9,000
Service & supply costs	35,000	30,000
Total Core Costs	281,000	295,000

Costs met by Non-DEFRA Core Contributions (25%) and Core Contributions (75%)

	Estimate 2023/2024 £	Outturn 2023/2024 £
Surrey County Council	15,245	15,245
Guildford Borough Council	5,437	5,437
Mole Valley District Council	5,437	5,437
Waverley Borough Council	5,437	5,437
Reigate & Banstead Borough Council	2,720	2,720
Tandridge District Council	2,720	2,720
SCC Surrey Arts	22,409	22,409
Pre-application Planning Advice	0	1,000
DEFRA Core (75%)	216,953	216,953
Core Income	276,358	277,358
Other Income	0	5,900
TOTAL Income	276,358	283,258

Current year deficit	4,642	11,742
Previous year surplus	18,579	18,579
Balancing surplus	13,937	18,579*

* No Drawdown from reserves, deficit of £11,743 met by SCC

SURREY HILLS AONB (PROJECTS) - OUTTURN REPORT FOR 2023-2024

	Estimate 2023/2024 £	Outturn 2023/2024 £
FiPL	582,893	527,060
Access	53,908	55,000
Total	636,801	582,060

SURREY HILLS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE (CORE) - OUTTURN REPORT FOR 2024-2025

	Estimate 2024/2025 £	Outturn 2024/2025 £
Core staff costs	238,000	306,000*
Premises costs	8,000	8,000
Service & supply costs	35,000	107,142*
Other Costs	7,000	10,902
Total Core Costs	288,000	432,044

*Defra capital and revenue uplifts included in outturn
Costs met by Non-DEFRA Core Contributions (25%) and Core Contributions (75%)

	Estimate 2024/2025 £	Outturn 2024/2025 £
Surrey County Council	23,071	23,071
Guildford Borough Council	5,709	5,709
Mole Valley District Council	5,709	5,709
Waverley Borough Council	5,709	5,709
Reigate & Banstead Borough Council	2,856	2,856
Tandridge District Council	2,856	2,856
SCC Surrey Arts	25,955	25,955
Pre-application Planning Advice	0	201
DEFRA Core (75%)	216,953	216,953
DEFRA Additional Revenue	0	84,028
Core Income	288,818	373,047
Generation Green	0	67,000
Other Income	0	1,750
TOTAL Income	288,818	441,797

Current year surplus	0	9,753
Previous year surplus	18,579	18,579
Balancing surplus	18,579	18,579*

* No contribution to reserves, surplus of £9,753 offset deficit met by SCC in 2023/24

SURREY HILLS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE (PROJECTS) - OUTTURN REPORT FOR 2024-2025

	Estimate 2024/2025 £	Outturn 2024/2025 £
FiPL	774,413	762,623
FiPL Historic Buildings	0	193,190
Access	231,450	231,450
DEFRA Core Capital	0	56,237
Total	1,005,863	1,243,500

ANNEX 2. ESTIMATES

SURREY HILLS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE (CORE) - ESTIMATES 2025 -2027

	Estimate 2025/2026 £	Estimate 2026/2027 £
Core staff costs	245,140	250,043
Premises costs	8,240	8,405
Service & supply costs	36,000	36,720
Other costs	480	
Total Core Costs	289,860	295,168

	Estimate 2025/2026 £	Estimate 2026/2027 £
Surrey County Council	21,649	24,722
Guildford Borough Council	5,880	8,678
Mole Valley District Council	5,880	8,678
Waverley Borough Council	5,880	8,678
Reigate & Banstead Borough Council	2,942	4,339
Tandridge District Council	2,942	4,339
SCC Surrey Arts	26,734	12,883
Pre-application Planning Advice	1,000	1,020
DEFRA Core (75%)	216,953	216,953
Core Income	289,860	290,290
Other Income	0	0
TOTAL Income	289,860	290,290

* SCC & D&B contributions for 26/27 based on funding formula.

Current year deficit	0	4,878
Previous year surplus	18,579	18,579
Balancing surplus	18,579	13,701

SURREY HILLS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE (PROJECTS) - ESTIMATES 2025/2026

	Estimate 2025/2026 £	Estimate 2026/2027 £
FiPL	582,894	120,000
Access	380,022	0
Capital (CDEL)	263,842	0
Total	1,226,758	120,000

Annex 4.

Access for All Programme



Surrey Hills
National
Landscape

Access for All programme

Defra has awarded each of England's National Landscapes, including National Park Authorities, an uplift in its core grant to make our National Landscapes more accessible to people of all ages and abilities and from all backgrounds. The Surrey Hills allocation in 2025/26 is £380k.

This is a delegated fund to the respective Protected Landscapes teams. The Surrey Hills National Landscape team will need to be responsible for assessing and scoring project proposals. This will be through a process of engaging with partners on co-designing and co-producing projects to secure the best outcomes against the four themes

People: Projects will demonstrate who will benefit from access to the Surrey Hills and will have the maximum impact for those groups with greater needs

Place: Projects will raise awareness and understanding of the Surrey Hills National Landscape

Nature: Projects will provide opportunities to increase understanding of and access to nature; inspiring and immersing people in nature; creating/improving access to woodlands, inspiring views etc

Climate: Projects will promote active travel and public transport to reduce the carbon footprint

Assessing and Approving Projects

As in previous years, the SHNL team will be working with the Surrey Coalition of Disabled People to audit, advise and provide appropriate training opportunities for the Surrey Hills team and our project partners. This will focus on gateway sites which already have facilities for visitors with the opportunity to enhance access and experiences through all-weather surfacing, benches, interpretation and sensory trails.

The Surrey Hills Programme Manager will be responsible for initially appraising the projects and then consult with the Surrey Hills Team and partners as appropriate. The Surrey Hills Director will be accountable for approving projects in accordance with Surrey County Council Procurement Standing Orders. All projects will be reported to the Surrey Hills Executive Management Board and to Defra as the sponsor, and all larger projects (over £1000) will be posted on the Surrey Hills website.

To determine whether a proposed application will deliver sufficient benefit to be supported, it should be judged against the assessment criteria below. Protected Landscapes can only score what is demonstrated in the content of the application.

The scoring process looks at four criteria:

- project outcomes
- value for money,

- sustainability / legacy of projects and
- ability to deliver.

Scoring

When assessing any project against the Project Outcomes scoring criteria, only the elements being directly funded through FiPL can be scored against.

The appropriate score should be circled for each criterion and the scores totalled up at the end to provide an aggregate score.

- 2: not demonstrated
- 4: one or more significant gaps in demonstration
- 6: some demonstration
- 8: shows good levels of assurance and demonstration
- 10: shows high levels of assurance and demonstration

Each criterion has been weighted for:

- a) Project outcomes (40%)
- b) Ability to deliver (20%)
- c) Sustainability / legacy of projects (20%)
- d) Value for Money (20%)

Decisions

Projects should not be supported unless they achieve a score of at least 6 against each criterion to achieve the baseline minimum. This will ensure that all projects deliver a meaningful and worthwhile outcome and will ensure consistency across all Protected Landscapes. The aggregate score along with the weighting of each criterion will determine how to allocate resource between competing proposals which have passed the baseline minimum. A spreadsheet is attached in Annex T to support this.

Scoring Criteria

A) The project

Projects should score highly, dependent on:

- the extent to which the project demonstrates that it is maximising the opportunity of the project to deliver outcomes across the themes of the programme
- the extent to which the project demonstrates that it will contribute towards the Protected Landscape's management plan / priorities
- the extent to which the project demonstrates that it will deliver the outcomes of the programme:
 - For People
 - more opportunities for people to explore, enjoy and understand the landscape

- more opportunities for diverse audiences to explore, enjoy and understand the landscape
- greater public engagement in land management, for example through volunteering
- For Place
 - enhancing or reinforcing the quality and character of the landscape
 - historic structures and features being conserved, enhanced or interpreted more effectively
- For Nature:
 - a greater area of wildlife-rich habitat
 - greater connectivity between habitats
 - better management of existing habitats for biodiversity
 - increased biodiversity
- For Climate
 - more carbon being stored, sequestered or both
 - reduced flood risk
 - a landscape that's more resilient to climate change

2	4	6	8	10
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B) Value for Money

A strong approach to delivering value for money should be demonstrated throughout the whole application. Projects should only score highly if they:

- are the most cost-effective way of delivering the desired outcomes
- can justify the need for the bespoke purchase, where appropriate
- clearly demonstrate the project costs with evidence to support the costs (e.g., alignment to other Defra payment rates and with comparative quotes provided)
- demonstrate why Access is the most effective route to funding to achieve the project outcomes
- are seeking an intervention rate that is the minimum necessary to deliver the project outcomes.
- are making use of additional funding sources, such as match funding, where appropriate

2	4	6	8	10
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C) Sustainability / legacy of projects

Projects should score highly if they:

- demonstrate that the project outcomes will have a lasting positive impact for the Protected Landscape and others once the programme of funding concludes
- demonstrate how the project will continue to maintain and build on the Access themes for the longer term.

2	4	6	8	10
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D) Ability to deliver

Projects should score highly if they:

- demonstrate clearly the resources available to enable delivery of the project to the required standard necessary to deliver the Access outcomes.
- show the roles of those involved in the project, demonstrating how they will contribute to the project's delivery
- demonstrate a clear capability to deliver the project in the timeframe required
- demonstrate that the steps taken to deliver the project are appropriate and achievable
- demonstrate how they will measure the progress of the project in meeting the intended outcomes

2	4	6	8	10
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Annex 5.

Defra Capital Uplift Programme

Summary of Spending Proposal	Total Estimated Capital Cost (£)
75-year Fixed-Point Sculptures - create a series of branded fixed-point sculptures at viewpoints that will be used to monitor the Surrey Hills over the next 75 years. Will include commission of Surrey Hills sculpture posts, design work, casting and installation in 30x30 sites.	£20,000.00
Project Acorn - to a programme of capital land management works including the creation of hedgerows and dead hedging (habitat banks), improve/ create nature rich habitats (heathland, chalk downland, wetland) to include tools, equipment and vehicle. Promoted Routes upgrades - waymarking, interpretation, surfacing works. Includes Cycle SH x 5; Rail to Ramble x 10; Leith Hill Greenway; Equestrian loops x 5. Additional conservation delivery on number of sites to be agreed. Public and organisations asked to volunteer time and /or make donations to projects that will be reinvested to maintain assets	£ 95,000.00
Surrey Hills National Landscape Boundary Signage. Creation, audits and installation of sculptural Corten steel signage with Surrey Hills National Landscape logo. Creating massive brand awareness and value to grow economy with extension of Surrey Hills Enterprise Members using Surrey Hills Trademark. New signs will replace old ones and Corten steel to last 75 years therefore savings. Some funding on engagement events including Surrey Hills Wood Fair in September.	£40,000.00
Inspiring Views. Creating new and repurposing Surrey Hills oak highway sculptures to add to programme of Inspiring Views, to include viewpoint clearance, access improvements and interpretation. Opportunities for donations to be reinvested back into Surrey Hills (Trust Find/ Society). Down 2 Earth benches	£40,000.00
Surrey Youth Services Rural Skills and Products for Surrey Hills. Partnership agreement to supply from Norbury Park sawmill a range of products to include show garden at Hampton Court Flower Show (to be repurposed in Surrey Hills), village gateway signs, placemaking features like highway finger posts, planters and nest boxes. Donations will be sought to invest in young people, training and materials.	£40,000.00
SHNL Office upgrade and opportunity to save future rent	£10,000.00
Discover the Surrey Hills. Investing to Save in Surrey Hills Enterprises CIC. Creating a new brochure with a guide to experiences offered by our Surrey Hills Enterprises Members, promoting collaboration, itineraries with point-of-sale racks and posters with QR code linking to new digital platform. This will grow Membership and investment.	£10,000.00
The Surrey Hills Book. Working with international publisher, Books Beyond Words – Empowering People Through Picture. There are 1.5 million people with a learning disability in the UK and an estimated 22,000 adults with a learning disability living here in Surrey. Widespread distribution through networks and income from book and associated fundraising will go into republishing and outreach. Up to £10k of £25k project.	£10,000.00

Annex 6. RISK REGISTER

	4 Very High	3 High	2 Medium	1 Low
4 DISASTER Significant service failure / total loss of public confidence / fatality / major financial crisis.	RED 16	RED 12	AMBER 8	GREEN 4
3 MAJOR Significant service disruption / serious public criticism / serious injury / large financial cost.	RED 12	RED 9	AMBER 6	GREEN 3
2 NOTICEABLE Some service delivery disruption / reduced public confidence / minor injury / unplanned financial cost.	AMBER 8	AMBER 6	GREEN 4	GREEN 2
1 MINIMAL Minor service delivery disruption / adverse public comment / no injury / low financial cost	GREEN 4	GREEN 3	GREEN 2	GREEN 1

Key

<u>Score</u>	<u>Colour</u>	<u>Action</u>
1 to 4	GREEN	: Monitor
5 to 8	AMBER	: Keep under review and seek mitigation.
9 to 16	RED	: Need further mitigation or contingency plan

Risk Register - Updated September 2025

No	Area	Description	Control Measures in place	Responsibility	Assessment – with controls in place			Further Control Measures	Responsibility	Assessment – WITH controls in place		
					Likelihood	Impact	Score			Likelihood	Impact	Score
1a	Reputation	Loss of ability to act independently in the interests of the Surrey Hills National Landscape	Members and staff act in line with the Constitution and best practice Quarterly review meetings with SCC Director NL Chair NL Director	SCC Director NL Chair NL Director	2	3	6	Proposed new Exec Management Group should provide greater advice and scrutiny	NE, SCC Director, NL Chair, NL Director	1	3	3
1b	Reputation	Loss of reputation due to impropriety.	Operating under SCC Standing Orders PR response	NL Chair SCC Democratic Services Comms Lead	1	3	3					
1c	Reputation	Lack of control over new National Landscapes brand for the Surrey Hills and potential conflict and inconsistent use of brand within Surrey Hills family.	Regular liaison of Family Chairs Regular meetings of the Communications Group	NL Chair Surrey Hills Comms Lead	3	2	6	New Trademark Licence Agreement and branding guidelines with National Landscape Assoc	Surrey Hills Director and Comms Lead	2	2	
1d	Reputation	Website being a major interface with the public and stakeholders not being fit for purpose	Updating content and ensuring compliance	Comms Lead	3	2	6	Need to allocate contingency funding and time	Comms Lead	2	2	
1e	Reputation	Surrey Hills highway signage being outdated and poorly maintained	Reporting by residents and parish councils of poor signage / finger posts The need to update boundary signs in live with National Landscapes rebrand		3	2	6	Proactive approach needed to identify where new signs are needed and allocated Defra funding	NL Director SCC Highways	2	2	4

No	Area	Description	Control Measures in place	Responsibility	Assessment – with controls in place			Further Control Measures	Responsibility	Assessment – WITH controls in place		
					Likelihood	Impact	Score			Likelihood	Impact	Score
2a	Performance	Lack of focus on strategy/ Surrey Hills Management Plan	Production of new Management Plan to be adopted in 2025 with new business plan	NL Director	1	3	3					
2b	Performance	Ineffective working relationship within the Family	Regular liaison of Family Chairman Regular monitoring at Board against Management Plan	NL Chair NL Director	2	3	6	Review of Constitution to ensure governance is fit for purpose	NE, SCC Director, NL Chair, NL Director	1	3	3
2c	Performance	Failure to innovate or deliver best practice from other National Landscapes and National Parks	Regular liaison through NLA and regional Protected Landscapes. Team attending National Conference	NL Director	2	3	6	Need to build capacity skills and have longer term funding security	NL Chair, NL Director	1	3	
2d	Performance	Inadequate staff capacity - turnover, lack of training, inability to recruit.	Appraisals. Team meetings. Training programmes	NL Director	2	3	6	Need to establish team and share development plans	SCC Director NL Director Surrey Hills Chairs	1	3	3
2e	Performance	Major failure of IT Systems	Contract with IT maintenance engineer. Programme of Surrey County Council back up and replacement to keep hardware & software up to date.	Surrey County Council ICT Support Officer	1	4	4					
2f	Performance	Failure or dangerous malfunction of electrical equipment.	Annual check for all electrical equipment.	National Trust (as landlord)	1	2	2					
2g	Performance	Failure to ensure business continuity in the event of significant incident.	Surrey County Council Service Business Continuity Plan to be enacted, as appropriate. Files kept on Shared drives	NL Director Surrey CC	1	4	4					
2h	Performance	Flexible office working	Flexible working from home, Surrey Hills Estate Office and SCC offices	NL Director NT (as landlord)	2	3	6	Need to investigate new flexible accommodation at Pipp brook House, Dorking. Potential for NHLF funding	SCC Mole Valley DC NL Director	1	3	6

No	Area	Description	Control Measures in place	Responsibility	Assessment – with controls in place			Further Control Measures	Responsibility	Assessment – WITH controls in place		
					Likelihood	Impact	Score			Likelihood	Impact	Score
2i	Performance	Failure to deliver Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme	Assessment and appraisal of applications Ability to generate suitable applications and spend	Programme Manager and Env Land Management Adviser	2	2	4					
3a	Financial	Lack of resources due to reduced Defra grant allocations. Reductions in reserves.	Agreed annual budget and monitoring. generate more independent income.	NL Chair NL Director Programme Manager, SCC finance	3	4	12	Seek longer term funding agreements with Defra and local authorities. Seek capacity to secure alternative income. Develop NHLF Landscape Connects bid.	NL Director Programme Manager	2	2	4
3b	Financial	Lack of local authority funding and cost of SCC hosting	Agreed annual budget and monitoring. Defra and local authorities.	NL Board NL Chair SCC, Director	3	3	9	Seek longer term funding agreements with new Constitution or service level agreement.	NL Board Chair SCC, Director	2	3	3
3c	Financial	Poor planning, control and monitoring	Review budget and prepare monitoring reports on a regular basis.	NL Director Programme Manager	2	3	6	Need to secure capacity for Programme Manager and support within SCC	Programme Manager	1	3	
4a	Governance	Failure to comply with corporate governance requirements (e.g. legal obligations, diversity agenda, health and safety requirements).	Surrey County Council Standing Orders Regulations Training & advice	SCC Manager SCC Democratic Services NL Director	1	3	3					
4b	Governance	Failure to provide adequate level of HR support to staff.	Surrey County Council HR support	SCC Manager NL Director	2	3	6	Need to review staff sand supervision structure	NL Director	1	3	

No	Area	Description	Control Measures in place	Responsibility	Assessment – with controls in place			Further Control Measures	Responsibility	Assessment – WITH controls in place		
					Likelihood	Impact	Score			Likelihood	Impact	Score
4c	Governance	Failure to combat financial mismanagement, fraud, theft.	Surrey County Council Standing Orders followed	SCC Manager NL Director SCC Finance	1	4	4					
4d	Governance	Failure to ensure public and staff safety at external events.	Risk assessment undertaken for all events, but these should be delivered through partners. Surrey County Council public liability insurance in place.	NL Director	1	4	4					
4e	Governance	Loss of leadership through election of Chairs	Election of independent Chair and annual election of Vice-Chairman Note that term end in Dec 2025 but opportunity to agree extension for 3 years	SCC Democratic Services	2	2	4					

ANNEX 3.
SURREY HILLS AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN – MONITORING REPORT 2020 – 2025

PILLAR 1: PLANNING

AIMS	OUTPUTS	TARGET KPI	TIME-SCALE	LEAD	PARTNERS	PRIORITIES FOR 2024/25	RED AMBER GREEN
Influence planning policy and decisions by advising on the preparation of Local Plans and developments affecting the AONB	Commenting on development plans, including Neighbourhood Plans		Annual	Surrey Hills Board	LPAs	To continue to monitor local plan developments and government policy.	
	Giving planning advice on planning applications affecting the AONB	300	Annual	Surrey Hills Board	LPAs	Last year 560 consultations were received. Need to prioritise those that have significant impact	
Raise awareness among the public and relevant bodies of the pressures on the Surrey Hills and the need for tight controls on development through a variety of channels including the Surrey Hills Newsletter	Responding to public's email queries and planning presentations, including to Planning Department Officers.	No specific numbers	Annual	Surrey Hills Board	LPAs	Continue to raise awareness of the importance of planning in protecting the National Landscape and delivering the vision.	
	Newsletter articles, statements and features on Planning. General PR	3 articles	Annual	Surrey Hills Board	Sy. Hills Society	Articles in Society Surrey Hills Views newsletter Will develop News threads on website and social media	
Support Natural England in the process of the AONB Boundary Review	An extended Surrey Hills AONB	Modification Order	2024	Surrey Hills Board	LPAs	Help provide evidence for, and planning advice on, the Candidate Areas.	

PILLAR 2 : LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT

AIMS	OUTPUTS	TARGET KPI	TIME-SCALE	LEAD	PARTNERS	PRIORITIES FOR 2024/25	RED AMBER GREEN
Support the DEFRA family to test and trial new approaches to	Deliver the Farming in Protected Landscapes	£560k grants	2025/26	Surrey Hills Board	FiPL Panel CLA NFU	To allocate grants to deliver Nature, Climate, Place and People outcomes	

Environmental Land Management to ensure more, bigger and less fragmented areas for wildlife, with no net loss of priority habitat and an increase in the overall extent of priority habitats						Priorities include innovation, collaboration, hedgerows and trees, and water	
	Heathland Connections Nature Recovery Strategy		25/26	NE	Surrey Hills Board NT, SCC, SWT, WBC, GBC, RSPB	Help to deliver the Heathland Connections programme by supporting the evidence, governance, targeting advice and grants. Develop Comms including website and signage for new Wealden Heath NNR	
	BIG CHALK – southern England restoration of chalk landscapes and streams		25/26	National Landscape Association	Surrey Hills Board, SWT, SCC, LNP, Rovers Trust	To help develop the Big Chalk programme by supporting the evidence, governance, targeting advice and grants.	
Support the development and extension of Farm Clusters across the Surrey Hills, including Greenscapes, Greensands and the North Downs Facilitation Groups	Number of farmers attending training session	6	Annual	Surrey Hills Board	NE, SCC, LNP, CLA, NFU	Env Land Management Adviser to coordinate. Target FiPL grants. Need to integrate with Local Nature Recovery Strategy and new Surrey Farm Cluster	
Work with the Surrey Nature Partnership to enhanced wildlife habitats	Review Surrey Hills Nature Recovery Strategy		2025 /26	Surrey CC	Surrey LNP	Need to be integrated into county LNRS.	
Reduce the impact of overhead lines in the Surrey Hills by implementing schemes with SSE and UK Power Networks	Develop scheme proposals	2 per annum	Annual	Surrey Hills Board		Limited capacity to progress new schemes	
Develop best practice and support schemes that promote and reinforce the rural character of the Surrey Hills country lanes and villages	Promotion of Environmental Design Guide (Available to download from here.)		Annual	Surrey Hills Board	Local Authorities	Need dedicated support and budget to take forward, particularly replacement signs. A demand to reinstate Working Group. Potential role for new Place advocate	

	Development of major transport scheme for Surrey Hills		Annual	SCC	Local Authorities	SCC implementing area speed limit order in the Surrey Hills using oak posts for repeater signs	
Develop Making Space For Nature Community Landscape and access program	Fundraising		Annual	Trust Fund	AONB Board Society SALC	Secured funding for Society to take on conservation volunteer coordinator role to develop project pipeline. More resources required for fundraising and philanthropy Society appointing new CEO and opportunity to develop Project Acorn as NHLF Landscapes Connections bid	

PILLAR 3 : ACCESS ENJOYMENT AND UNDERSTANDING

AIMS	OUTPUTS	ACTUALS KPI	TIME-SCALE	LEAD	PARTNERS	PRIORITIES	RED AMBER GREEN
Access for All	Deliver the Defra Access For All programme		2025/26	Surrey Hills Board	NT, SCC, Surrey Coalition, SMEF, NE et al	Co-design and co-delivery of programme of activity focussing on Gateway sites and sustainable access	
Raise awareness of the Surrey Hills	Development and updating of surreyhill.org website and increasing number of visits	Jan-Aug 2025 150	Annual	Surrey Hills Board		Optimisation scheduled for website development post-launch.	
	Increase social media reach across a range of platforms (seek at least a 10% increase)	F: 10k I: 6.2k	Quarterly	Surrey Hills Board		Increase since last year: Facebook: 558 Twitter: 102 Instagram: 515	
		F: 2.9k I: 6k	Quarterly	Enterprises		Increase in last year F: 174 I: 496	
		F 900	Quarterly	Society		Increase in last year F: 18	

		I. 2.3k				T: 68 I: 95	
		Instagram 5.2k	Quarterly	SH Arts		Increase in last year I: 233	
	Google Banner – update photos, videos, posts and review Reviews. Aim to maintain rank and position amongst Designated Landscapes	Actual 14,991 Reviews 4.7/5 score	Ongoing	Surrey Hills Board		Surrey Hills is 6th highest rank in England of 44 National Parks and AONBs	
	Establish unified Surrey Hills database and e-bulletin schedule amalgamating all family databases.	14k		SHNL + Enterprises	Surrey Hills Family	Friends of 2024 averages: 45% open rate (average benchmark for email open rates is 21.5%) 6% click rate (average benchmark for email click rates is 2.91%)	
	Develop video campaigns. Aim to increase views and incorporate into website	17 videos in one year 2,400 YouTube views	Ongoing	SHNL Board	Surrey Hills Family		
	Number of press, web and magazine articles	Target 24 Actual 40	ongoing	Surrey Hills Family		Press releases on news section of website. Introduction of ‘journal’ section for shorter articles, often written by partners	
A consistent and coherent identity for the Surrey Hills	Refresh the Surrey Hills Branding Guidelines and Comms Strategy and ensure gatekeeping to protect and enhance brand identity through Collaboration Group	Yes	Ongoing	SHNL Board	Family	Discussed at Chairs Group branding guidelines updated taking on National Landscape re-naming to incorporate in new website.	
Develop and extend the Cycle and Equestrian Surrey Hills programmes.,	Increase the number of promoted cycle trails. Leith Hill to Box Hill. NDW cycle link (no of	2	Ongoing	SHNL Board	Cycling UK SCC, NDW, Cycling UK,	Leith Hill Greenway (Denbies to Leith Hill) implemented.	

supported through the Countryside Access Working Groups	waymarked Cycle Surrey Hills routes)	6			reps of Landowners and user groups	Plans to extend to Great Bookham Refresh proposals for Cycle Surrey Hills network as multi-user routes	
	Management of wild mountain bike trails	tbc	tbc	SHNL/ FC/ SHS	Cycling UK. SCC, NT landowners	New Mountain Bike strategy being developed in response to greater pressure. Area access policy. Development of Conservation Volunteers	
	Number of waymarked equestrian trails and annual Horseman's Sunday event	7	Annual	SHNL Board	BHS SCC	Waymarking needed on existing trails. Horseman's Sunday held on 16 th April	

PILLAR 4 : GROWING THE SURREY HILLS ECONOMY

AIMS	OUTPUTS	TARGET KPI	TIME-SCALE	LEAD	PARTNERS	PRIORITIES	RED AMBER GREEN
Support the development of Surrey Hills Enterprises CIC to increase its membership	Number of members	235	Annual	Enterprises		425 target by August 2025	
	Number of large events			Enterprises	Surrey Hills		
	Surrey Hills Spring Festival		March		Rural Life Museum		
	Surrey Hills Country Fair		May		Merrist Wood		
	Surrey Hills Wood Fair		Sept		Agric Society		
	Markets & smaller events – Surrey Hills Artisan Markets Surrey Hills Artisan Fair at Painshill Surrey Hills Christmas Fair at West Horsley Surrey Hills Frost Fair at Box Hill		Monthly Sep Nov Dec				

Help secure the continuation of a Surrey Rural LEADER programme to benefit the economy of the Surrey Hills area.	A new scheme covering the Surrey Hills		2025	Local Action Group	LEPs SCC LAs	SHNL objectives partly being delivered through new Farming in the Landscape programme. Looking at opportunities through the UK SPF with B&Ds	
Develop a Destination Management Organisation to maximise the benefits of rural tourism in partnership with Visit Surrey, regional and national tourism bodies.	Number of businesses featuring on new DMO website		2026	AONB Board Enterprises	LAs Visit Surrey Tourism SE Visit England	Next stage of development underway including working with corporates and an on-line Surrey Hills shop and voucher on new website	
Develop relationship and investment opportunities through Local Enterprise Partnerships including Coast to Capital and Enterprise M3.	Level of financial investment in Surrey Hills	2 bids submitted	Annual	AONB Board Enterprises	LEPs SCC LAs	LEPs under review	

PILLAR 5: ADVOCACY , PARTNERSHIP AND COORDINATION

AIMS	OUTPUTS	TARGET KPI	TIME-SCALE	LEAD	PARTNERS	PRIORITIES	RED AMBER GREEN
Ensure sound governance, reporting and monitoring of the AONB Management Plan through quarterly meetings of the Surrey Hills AONB Board.	Quarterly reporting to AONB Board	4	Quarterly	SHNL Board	Surrey Hills Family	Quarterly reporting to AONB Board	
	Annual report to DEFRA and partners	1	Annual	SHNL Board		On target	
	Secure annual financial contributions		Annual	SHNL Board		On target	
	Revised Constitution		2025	SHNL Board	DEFRA SCC LAs	Seeking adoption at September AGM	

Develop the Surrey Hills Trust Fund with the Community Foundation for Surrey (CFS)	Target of £100k through flow project funding per annum		2025	Trust Fund/ CFS	Surrey Hills Family	Need dedicated support for admin and development. Project Acorn and NHLF bid Seeking new Panel Chair	
	Target of £500k endowment		2025	Trust Fund/ CFS	Surrey Hills Family	Need Project Acorn and NHLF bid Seeking new Panel Chair dedicated support	
Oversee the work of the Surrey Hills family.	Partnership Tour – number attending	30	July	SHNL Board	Surrey Hills Family	No tour as hosted NLA conference	
	Community Forum		October	SHNL Board	SALC Society	Supported SALC conference with display and Planning advice	
	Surrey Hills Symposium.	Circa 500 inc online audience	November	SHNL Board	Uni of Surrey Surrey Hills Family	Next Symposium planned for Nov 2025 Growing Together	
Deliver a new Management Plan for adoption	Review the AONB Management Plan		2025			On target FOR LAUNCH AT Symposium in November	
Develop policy and strategy with central and local government	NAAONB Conference and AGM		Annual	SHNL Board	National Landscape Association	Conference co-hosted in July.	
	Support SEEPL (Re SE and East Regional Protected Landscapes Group)		Annual	SHNL Board	Regional Protected Landscapes	Need to reconvene group.	
Monitor landscape change of the Surrey Hills AONB.	Establish a methodology and a baseline		2021	SHNL Board	Surrey University	establishing fixed point photography	

