



Surrey Hills National Landscape Board

Item 7. The Surrey Hills Management Plan (2025 – 2030) A 75-year vision for a thriving National Landscape for people and nature

Purpose of the report:

To report on the delivery of the Management Plan (2020 – 2025) To update members on the adoption and promotion of the Management Plan (2025 – 2030) To agree the proposal for developing the new Delivery Plan for 2025 - 2030
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Recommendations:

Members are asked to

1. Note the progress in delivering the 2020 – 2030 Management Plan
2. Note the progress in adopting the Management Plan (2025 – 2030), its publication and promotion
3. Agree proposals to develop the new Delivery Plan (2025 – 2030)

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 Appendix 1 is the final monitoring report that summarises the achievements in delivering the Management Plan 2020 – 2050.

1.4 2024 was the 75th 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.



1.5 As Natural England is currently undertaking the boundary review and Surrey authorities are going through a process of local government reorganisation, the Management Plan sets out a vision and policy framework that can be adopted for an

extended Surrey Hills National Landscape area and by new local authority partners, as appropriate.

2. The Management Plan 2025 - 2030

2.1 The Management Plan 2025 – 2030 is the outcome of an extensive public engagement process that has developed a 75-year vision for the National Landscape.

Section 1. Introduction. This sets out the purpose of the Plan, maps and infographics, and the international and national context of Protected Landscape, and the Plan making process

Section 2. The Special Qualities. This identifies the pressures and threats to the outstanding features of the Surrey Hills National Landscape.

Section 3. The Vision, Targets and Strategic Priorities This provides a narrative of how the landscape has changed over the last 75 years and the Defra Environmental Action Plan themes and targets over the next 75 years for:

- Thriving Plants and Animals
- Climate Change Mitigation & Adoption
- Enhancing Beauty, Heritage and Engagement with the Natural Environment

Section 4. Policy Framework. Sets out the policies that will guide Responsible Bodies in their duty (LURA 2023) in how to seek to further the purpose of the National Landscape designation.

Section 5. Delivery Strategy. Sets out the governance and administrative structure for a repurposed Surrey Hills Joint Advisory Committee including establishing a new Steering Group.

3. Publishing and promoting the Management Plan

3.1 Once the Management Plan has been adopted by Surrey County Council on 16th December 2025 it will be published as 3 documents:

Full Management Plan. To be published as a printable document and dedicated webpages, with minimal design.

Executive Summary and Management Plan Policy framework. To publish an A4 printed document with full design using maps, photographs and illustrations. It will provide a summary of the 5 Part Management Plan signposting to the online full document. The target



audience will be Responsible Bodies, Officers, Members, parish councils, decision makers, land managers and funding partners. It will include all the Management Plan policies and provide contact information.

75-year Vision and Charter. This is a public facing document which will set out the 75-year vision and priorities for the Surrey Hills that was launched at the Symposium on 18th November. It includes contact information, links to the Management Plan website, a map, the Year 2100 poem and the Charter for how people can make a positive contribution to the Surrey Hills, including volunteering. This will be available through the Society, our Enterprises events and other public facing opportunities. Copies will be available at the Board meeting.

4. Business Planning

4.1 The Management Plan sets out the long-term vision, targets and policy framework for the National Landscape to guide all responsible bodies in their duty to deliver and have regard to the designated area. The Surrey Hills Board however will also set out its role in delivering the priorities and targets for:

- Nature
- People and Place
- Climate

4.2 It is proposed that 3 workshops will be held in February to develop the Business Plan, which will be presented to the Partnership Board at its Spring meeting. This will be led by the Surrey Hills team with a proposed budget of £5k to build capacity to facilitate the business plan making process.

Annex 1: Surrey Hills Management Plan Progress Review 2020 – 2025

The Surrey Hills Management Plan is a statutory document, and all public bodies have a duty of regard to considering the policies in carrying out their functions that have an impact on the National Landscape. The Surrey Hills Family has been established to work with organisations, agencies and individuals to support the delivery of the Surrey Hills Management Plan’s Vision (2020-2025):

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

The Surrey Hills family will pursue the vision through our brand values: **“A thriving place for people and nature”**

The Brand Values are:

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

The Surrey Hills Family Delivery Plan details how the targets will be delivered under the following Surrey Hills Management Plan Pillars:

- 1 Advocacy, Partnership and Coordination,
- 2 Landscape Conservation and Enhancement,
- 3 Access, Enjoyment and Understanding,
- 4 Growing the Surrey Hills Economy
- 5 Planning

Pillar 1: Advocacy, Partnership and Coordination

Management Plan policies	Target (2020)	Progress (2025)
	Raise awareness of the Surrey Hills locally and nationally	• New website launched 2022 with 305k visits annually • Facebook increase of over 100% • Instagram increase of over 150% • Twitter activity paused as of 2024



		• Opened LinkedIn account 2024 (370 followers) • Google rating 4.7/5 16k reviews • 16k subscribers of Friends of Newsletter • 10 new My Surrey Hills videos with over 4,000 views • National press over 200 news stories
	Consistent and coherent identity for the Surrey Hills	• National rebrand in 2023 of all AONBs to National Landscapes • Surrey Hills brand guidelines 2024 – need more capacity for Family sign off
	Ensure sound governance, reporting and monitoring of the Management Plan through quarterly meetings of the Surrey Hills Board.	• COVID has led to hybrid meetings • 90%+ attendance • Quarterly reporting to Board • Contributed towards Glover and additional Access for All and Capital Uplift funding • Annual report to DEFRA , including Glover and Biodiversity Fund • Manage budget within SCC Standing Orders and LA contributions • Proposed new terms of reference Dec 2025
	Develop the Surrey Hills Trust Fund with the Community Foundation for Surrey (CFS)	• No resource to develop Fund. • New ambition with Project Acorn and Lottery bid
	Oversee the work of the Surrey Hills family Working Groups by providing administrative, project and communications support	• Annual Surrey Hills Symposium events: ○ 2021 Climate and Biodiversity Crisis ○ 2022 Access for All ○ 2023 Woodland Wonder ○ 2024 Year 2100 Vision ○ 2025 Growing Together



		• Need more administrative capacity to grow Working Groups. • Quarterly Surrey Hills Arts meetings • Community Forum – presence at SALC AGM • Annual partnership tour
	Deliver a new Management Plan for adoption	• Management Plan to be adopted in 2025
	National Conference and AGM. Initiate and contribute to policy advice, reporting, collaborative research and projects	• Attended annual conferences • Hosted 2025 field trips with partners
	Art in Landscape strategy working with NLA	• Hub for Nature Calling
	Support SEEPL and contribute to policy advice, reporting, collaborative research and projects	• Working on strategic nature recovery, including Big Chalk and Farming in Protected Landscapes • Lack of regional capacity
	The Prize to Transform The Future – raising the profile of the Surrey Hills as part of a greener, healthier, wilder and low carbon London City Region	• Campaign ceased due to COVID
	Monitor landscape change to help identify the types of change taking place and how these are affecting the landscape character and natural beauty of the Surrey Hills.	• Additional resources required for wider status of the Surrey Hills report

Pillar 2: Landscape Conservation and Enhancement

Management Plan policies	Target (2020)	Progress (2025)



F2, F5, W1, W5, B1 – B4, HC2, RT1, RT4, CE6	Support the DEFRA family to test and trial new approaches to Environmental Land Management to ensure more, bigger and less fragmented areas for wildlife	• Farming in Protected Landscapes programme distributed £2,293,195 since 2021: Land & Nature ○ 34,328 hectares of land supported through FiPL ○ 24,543 metres of new hedgerow planted ○ 1,777 metres of hedgerow restored ○ 26 ponds restored and thriving ○ 5,674 hectares improved for agricultural soil health Climate & Resilience ○ 63 projects reducing flood risk ○ 36 projects strengthening nature-friendly, sustainable farm businesses People & Participation ○ 85 farmers actively engaged in the programme ○ 1,403 volunteers contributing their time and expertise Investment & Funding ○ 122 projects funded to date ○ £332,455 secured in match funding • Partner in Big Chalk from 2023 • Heathland Connections and designation of Wealden Heath NNR in 2025
F2, F5, W1, W5, B1 – B4, HC2, RT1, RT4, CE6	Support the development and extension of Farm Clusters across the Surrey Hills, including Greenscapes, Greensands and the North Downs Facilitation Groups	• Development of Farm Cluster including Whatsapp Group and cluster visits
P2, P6, RT3	Reduce the impact of overhead lines in the Surrey Hills by implementing schemes with SSE and UK Power Networks	• No new schemes delivered • Supporting regional steering group



HC2, HC3, TT1 – TT5, CE1, CE3	Develop best practice and support schemes that promote and reinforce the rural character of the Surrey Hills country lanes and villages	• Scheme to replace old highway signs rolled out in 2025 with new corten steel boundary markers • New finger posts installed, but need to maintain old posts – working group ceased, need more capacity to prioritise • Working with SCC Place team and supporting area-wide speed limits
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Pillar 3: Access, Enjoyment and Understanding

Management Plan policies	Target (2020)	Progress (2025)
RT1, RT2, TT1, CE1	Develop and extend the Cycle and Equestrian Surrey Hills programmes., supported through the Countryside Access Working Groups	• Leith Hill Greenway (Denbies to Leith Hill) implemented. • New approach to waymarking for Rail to Ramble, Cycle Surrey Hills and equestrian routes • Need more capacity for administrating working groups • Attendance at SCAF • Mountain biking position statement published
RT1, RT2, TT1, CE1	Reduce the impact of illegal use of byways	• Byways working group • Volunteering sessions with community to reduce illegal activity • Press releases
F5, W2, W4, B3, HC1, HC4, RT1, RT3, RT4CE1, CE6	Inspire and engage new audiences through the Surrey Hills Arts programme	• Annual Heathland Artworks trail with RSPB and UCA students • National Nature Calling hub • Harvest and WonderDusk events at Box Hill • Habitat programme – green urban environments • Incubate residency with National Trust Leith Hill Place



W3, B3, HC1, HC4, RT1, RT3, CE1, CE6	Develop an Inspiring Views programme to open up and maintain up to two important views per annum to and from the Surrey Hills	• 12 Inspiring Views sculptures created and installed • Development of repurposing seedhead oak sculptures as reclaimed views to open up further views
F5, W3, W4, B3, HC1, HC4, RT2, CE1, CE2, CE5, CE6	Increase Society membership, profile, events programmes and volunteering opportunities	• Surrey Hills Ranger programme developed with two members of staff to deliver capital access and conservation improvements with volunteers • Over 57,000 volunteer hours since 2021 • Recruited new Surrey Hills Society CEO • Projects including Growing Together and Farm for Health
F5, W3, W4, B3, HC1, HC4, RT2, CE1, CE2, CE5, CE6	Deliver events programme for the public	• Surrey Hills Wood Fair • Surrey Hills Spring Fair • Christmas Fairs • New events including Surrey Hills Fire & Food, Country Fair • Horseman's Sunday annual event • Under The Stars NHLF bid (2020) – did not develop • Support the Counties various walking festivals – need more capacity • Support other Surrey initiatives like Surrey County Show, Heritage Open Days and Surrey Day – need more capacity
HC4, RT2, RT4, CE1, CE2, CE5, CE6	Engage new audiences in the Surrey Hills in health and wellbeing	• Successful NHLF bid for Growing Together – engaged over 500 people experiencing barriers to nature. Led by Surrey Hills Society • Ambition to bid to NHLF to develop this into a wider programme



		• Farm for Health project funded by Mental Health Investment Fund bringing people with mental health challenges onto working farms. Led by Surrey Hills Society • Active Inclusion annual hike • Defra Access for All fund £860k since 2022 for capital improvements to the countryside. Engaged with Surrey Coalition of Disabled People to deliver capital projects: ○ Easier access paths ○ Boardwalks ○ Off-road wheelchairs • Two co-created children's books published
B4, HC1, RT1, RT2, Rt3, Rt4, P1, P2, P3, P6, TT4, TT5, CE6	Promote Dark Skies	• Dark Skies Matter 'Lights Out' campaign 21 May 2021. Need capacity to continue • Three Dark Skies events at Newlands Corner
HC1, HC4, RT1, Rt2, RT4, CE1, CE4	Promote sustainable transport with rail and bus operators	• Rail to Ramble waymarking and poster campaigns • Regular engagement with Community Rail Partnerships • Surrey Connect bus campaigns • Video promotion • Better by Bus and rail booklet – walks that span the width of the Surrey Hills for over 60 miles by rail

Pillar 4: Growing the Surrey Hills Economy

Management Plan policies	Target (2020)	Progress (2025)



F1, F5, W1, W2, HC1, CE1, CE2, CE5, CE6	Support business development in the Surrey Hills focusing on sustainable development Increase markets / customers for Surrey Hills products & services • The Trademark Surrey Hills mark • Nos of new estab. stocking local produce Promotion to public	• Over 240 Surrey Hills Enterprises members • Regular membership events and networking • Power of Place conference • Member celebration events
F2, F3, W1, W2, HC3, Rt1, Rt4, P4, P5, TT1, CE1, CE2, CE3 CE4	Help secure the continuation of a Surrey Rural LEADER programme to benefit the economy of the Surrey Hills area.	• Supported Rural England Shared Prosperity Fund delivery including charring panel • Advice on schemes
F1, F3, F5, W2, W3, B1, HC1, HC4, RT1 – 4, TT1, TT3, CE1- 4, CE6	Develop a Destination Management Organisation to maximise the benefits of rural tourism in partnership with Visit Surrey, regional and national tourism bodies.	• Regular liaison with Visit Surrey, Surrey Hills Enterprises and SHNL • Developing and sharing content
F1, W1, W2, HC3, RT1, RT4, P1 -5, TT1, TT4, CE1, CE2	Develop relationship and investment opportunities through Local Enterprise Partnerships including Coast to Capital and Enterprise M3.	• Local Enterprise Partnerships have ceased, liaison with Business Surrey

Pillar 5: Planning

Management Plan policies	Target (2020)	Progress (2025)
F3, F4, B4, HC3, RT1, RT4, P 1 – 6	Influence planning policy and decisions by advising on the preparation of Local Plans and	• Over 1,700 consultations commented on since 2021



TT2 – TT5, CE3	developments affecting the Surrey Hills	• Supported Planning Officers Working Group • Advice on major development schemes such as Gatwick extension and Blackwell Farm
F3, F4, B4, HC3, P1-6, TT2, TT5,	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	• Position statement on solar energy • Promotion of new LURA duty • Quarterly features in Surrey Hills Society newsletter
P1, P6	Support Natural England in the process of the AONB Boundary Review	• On 21st November Natural England launched the notice period for the Surrey Hills National Landscape Boundary Variation. The notice period will end on 14th of January 2026.