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<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>AONB</strong></td>
<td>Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BHCC</strong></td>
<td>Brighton &amp; Hove City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BHS</strong></td>
<td>British Horse Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CROW Act 2000</strong></td>
<td>Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CTC</strong></td>
<td>Cyclists Touring Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EBC</strong></td>
<td>Eastbourne Borough Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EH</strong></td>
<td>English Heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ESCC</strong></td>
<td>East Sussex County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HA’s</strong></td>
<td>Highway Authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HCC</strong></td>
<td>Hampshire County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IMBA</strong></td>
<td>International Mountain Biking Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LA’s</strong></td>
<td>Local Authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LAFs</strong></td>
<td>Local Access Forum (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Landowner(s)</strong></td>
<td>Anyone who owns or manages land affected by the South Downs Way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Link Routes</strong></td>
<td>Important routes linking the South Downs Way with local amenities and public transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LTCS</strong></td>
<td>Landfill Tax Credit Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NTO</strong></td>
<td>National Trail Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RA</strong></td>
<td>Ramblers Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RoW</strong></td>
<td>Rights of Way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SDJC</strong></td>
<td>South Downs Joint Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SDVRS</strong></td>
<td>South Downs Volunteer Ranger Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SDW</strong></td>
<td>South Downs Way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SDW Corridor</strong></td>
<td>The area of land through which the Trail runs that directly affects the users experience, for the purpose of this strategy the corridor is defined as 1km wide with the trail running through the centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SDWMP</strong></td>
<td>South Downs Way Management Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SDWSG</strong></td>
<td>South Downs Way Steering Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SDWVVW</strong></td>
<td>South Downs Way Volunteer Wardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stakeholders</strong></td>
<td>Anyone who has an interest in the South Downs Way including landowners, user groups, managers, funders, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TSE</strong></td>
<td>Tourism South East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VB</strong></td>
<td>Visit Britain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WCC</strong></td>
<td>Winchester City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wider Landscape</strong></td>
<td>This refers to the Downland landscape beyond the SDW corridor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WSCC</strong></td>
<td>West Sussex County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>YHA</strong></td>
<td>Youth Hostel Association</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.0 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this plan

This Management Plan provides a framework to guide the management and development of the South Downs Way, to enhance its corridor and to ensure high quality information and service provision. It will promote and raise awareness and recognition of the South Downs Way as a regional asset, a flagship for the Rights of Way network in the area and will seek to contribute to the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the Sussex and Hampshire countryside.

The Plan will set out the issues that affect the National Trail, the aims and objectives of the management of the Trail and the actions needed to achieve the vision for the South Downs Way. The plan seeks to identify the key partners that are needed in it’s implementation and the likely resources required. Armed with the evidence of these issues, key partners and resources, the Plan’s purpose is to direct effort to the most important areas needed to fulfil the vision both within the South Downs Way management teams and to other bodies for whom the Trail is not a primary responsibility.

1.2 A Vision for the South Downs Way

The South Downs Way National Trail will be a well maintained continuous route, providing both long and short distance quality access opportunities across the South Downs for visitors and local people alike; accessible to as wide a section of the community as is practicable with safe access for walkers, cyclists, horse riders, carriage drivers and the less abled, along appropriate surfaces, with easy to use furniture on accurately waymarked routes. The Trail will pass through the finest landscapes, a corridor rich in well managed cultural heritage sites in sympathetic settings, teaming with wildlife; the Trail corridor will be a biodiversity highway linking the richest habitats together. The South Downs Way will have the facilities necessary for all users to enjoy and complete the Trail if they wish too. There will be adequate overnight accommodation near the Trail for all budgets; drinking water and refreshments will be easily reached and tranquillity always enjoyed. Information will be available and accessible to allow visitors to use the South Downs Way to meet their needs, from an extreme challenge to a gentle wander.

The South Downs Way will continue to mean different things to different people, it will be an escape from urban living, the local gym, a social centre, a wildlife reserve, a journey through time, an adrenaline rush, a work place, a local larder, a classroom, and a gallery to name a few. Most of all it will be an inspiration, to cherish and enjoy this landscape and its wildlife and to protect it in any way they can.
1.3 The National Trails Family

The South Downs Way is one of fifteen National Trails in England and Wales designated under the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, “to allow the public to make extensive journeys on foot, horseback or bicycle, on routes which, for the most part, do not pass along roads used by vehicles.”

National Trails are defined as routes which “offer the chance to walk on routes which by virtue of their character and quality are national; reflecting the grandest, wildest and most beautiful landscapes that the nation has to offer.”

1.0 Introduction

1.4 The South Downs Way

The South Downs Way is Britain’s only fully open bridleway National Trail, open to walkers, cyclists, and horse riders for its entire length. The Trail was first designated in 1963 and opened in 1972 by the then Countryside Commission. At that time, it ran from Eastbourne only as far as the Hampshire border at Buriton. In 1991 it was extended to Winchester.

Passing along the Trail, users experience the whole unique spectrum of Downland landscapes. Starting from Winchester, the Hampshire Downs are a rolling chalk landscape of mixed arable and grassland, large fields separated by network of hedges and old drove roads. The few woodlands near the trail are mostly estate woodlands – at Queen Elizabeth Country Park where the first large post war plantations are encountered. Settlements are sparse, long views intermittent and mostly only to the south, with the notable exceptions of Old Winchester Hill and Butser Hill that offer particularly expansive views in all directions.

Travelling east into West Sussex, the Trail leaves the old drove roads of Hampshire for a more ancient route along the crest of the now defined scarp slope. The path passes through a more extensively wooded landscape, with a mixture of ancient woodlands, mixed plantations, and the developing secondary woodland. Where these woodlands recede there are far reaching views both to the south – the Isle of Wight slowly fades from view as the traveller heads east – to the north, over the wooded Low Weald to the Greensand high point of Black Down and beyond to the North Downs. There are areas of chalk grassland and cropland and the first of the major river valleys like the Arun and Adur punctuate both the journey and the chalk ridge.

Approaching East Sussex, the landscape becomes steadily less wooded and the open space and expansive skies of Bello’s classic Downland are ever more apparent. The great Ice Age dry valley of the Devil’s Dyke marks the East Sussex border. The string of charming little villages along the spring line at the foot of the Downs retain their historic character. To the south, the coastal conurbations become more prominent – the city skyline of Brighton explains the increasing number of people encountered on the Trail – the energy of the sea also grows, hinting at the white cliffs to come.

At Alfriston the South Downs Way splits. The bridleway goes inland, above the ancient chalk figure of the Long Man of Wilmington, and then loops south to Eastbourne. There are long views north to Ashdown Forest, east across Pevensey Levels to Hastings and the distant sandstone cliffs at Fairlight. Walkers can head south down the beautiful Cuckmere valley to Exceat and the Seven Sisters. The clifftop section from the Cuckmere Estuary to Eastbourne is by far the busiest part of the walk, along the breathtaking and invigorating Heritage Coast, but the stunning land and seascape absorbs all the visitors and holds their attention without difficulty.
1.5 Policy context

The South Downs Way Management Plan is one of a host of strategic and statutory documents that steer or affect the evolution of the access provision and landscape of the South Downs. This plan, in part, echoes the objectives of other strategic documents adding weight to our mutual recommendations/actions and adds a finer layer of detail to other wider regional strategies. Importantly, the South Downs Way Management Plan acts as a common thread linking all the separate documents together in one unified strategy. Below are the main policy documents that link or help deliver the objectives of this plan.

The South Downs Management Plan

The South Downs Joint Committee officially published the South Downs Management Plan in June 2008. It is a management plan for the protected landscape of the Sussex Downs and East Hampshire AONB’s through which the entire South Downs Way National Trail runs. It is intended to be a joint statement of intent for all organisations protecting the South Downs. The plan has been produced by the SDJC, on behalf of all the Local Authorities in the South Downs, to fulfil their statutory requirement under the CROW Act 2000, for each AONB to have a management plan.

The plan is set out under 10 key ambitions, but of particular relevance to the SDW are:

Ambition 1: An unspoilt landscape of the highest quality and diversity.

Ambition 2: An historic and cultural heritage valued by local people and visitors and benefiting future generations.

Ambition 4: A landscape rich in wildlife with extensive swathes of interlinking habitat managed to maximise benefits for nature.

Ambition 7: A buoyant local economy directly contributing to the management of natural beauty and its enjoyment.

Ambition 8: Wide ranging opportunities for countryside recreation and access respecting the natural beauty of the South Downs.

Ambition 10: Widespread awareness and understanding of the South Downs.

Also of relevance is developing the South Downs Access and Recreation Strategy which is at the time of writing is a working draft.
National Trails Quality Standards

The Countryside Agency (now Natural England), developed a series of 'Quality Standards for National Trails', which set out the standards to which National Trails aspire. These standards reflect the range of visitor experiences; some can be delivered directly by the Trail managers, others fall within the remit of other bodies. The Quality Standards set out 54 specific standards and 24 measures of progress and greatly influence the objectives of the SDWMP. A full list of Quality Standards is reproduced in the Appendices.

The quality standards are also listed against the actions within this Management Plan to allow a clear cross reference between the standards and this plan.

The purpose of the National Trail Quality Standards

These quality standards have been devised to provide better value for money in planning, management and maintenance of the National Trail network, and application of these standards should increase the enjoyment of those who use the Trails.

It is not intended that any one organisation should be responsible for the provision of every item outlined in this document as the delivery of high quality National Trails relies upon a partnership between many organisations and individuals including the Countryside Agency, the local authorities, voluntary bodies, landowners and occupiers, private sector companies, local individuals and communities. These quality standards will ensure that we all work with consistent aims.

The Acorn logo is the recognised symbol for National Trails and also represents a hallmark of high quality provision and management.

This document also includes information on how we will measure achievement of the standards but full compliance should be seen as a target to be achieved over time as opportunities and resources become available. Those responsible should seek to implement the standards as soon as the need is evident since delay will detract from the quality of experience for Trail users.

Rights of Way Improvement Plans

The public rights of way that cross our landscape today, both urban and rural are predominantly the result of historical usage. These rights are extremely valuable as both recreational resources and communicational links but do not always meet the needs of our modern lives. To help steer rights of way management and identify future access developments, the CROW Act 2000 gave each Local Highway Authority the duty to prepare and publish Rights of Way Improvement Plans by November 2007.

The South Downs Way travels through three Local Highway Authorities, each with their own improvement plans that have been approached in slightly different ways. However each of the plans outlines actions that will effect and help improve the SDW and likewise actions outlined in this plan will help to deliver their aims and address their key issues. All the plans encouragingly have similar objectives and all go beyond just rights of way but look at access and recreation in the counties generally.

A fourth RoW Improvement Plan is also relevant to the South Downs Way and that is Brighton & Hove, although the Trail itself is outside their area, important link routes between the urban conurbation and the SDW are covered by this plan. The links between these Rights of Way Improvement Plans and this South Downs Way Plan are highlighted in the Action Plan section of this document.

Brighton & Hove - Rights of Way Improvement Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vision</th>
<th>More people using and enjoying a better rights of way and open access network to improve the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aims</td>
<td>A. Improve the existing Rights of Way (ROW) network and maintain it to a high standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Implement identified Missing Links (appendix 6.1) to improve route coherence, access to the network and reduce dependence on the car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. Develop and promote the access network to support and encourage healthy exercise for all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D. Make full use of the council's position as a major landowner to ensure that an holistic approach is taken towards access to the surrounding countryside and South Downs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### East Sussex - Rights of Way Improvement Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vision</th>
<th>A county where people of all abilities, backgrounds and ethnic groups have greater access opportunities to a wide range of well maintained and well connected public rights of way and open access.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Aims   | 1. Improve resourcing  
2. Improve partnership working  
3. Improve safety and convenience  
4. Improve access for all  
5. Improve information  
6. Improve access to the countryside from urban areas  
7. Improve promoted routes |

### West Sussex - Rights of Way Improvement Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vision</th>
<th>A county where there are maximum opportunities for people to enjoy the countryside on foot, by horse and by bicycle for health, recreation and to access services, while recognising the need to balance this with the interests of those who live and work in the countryside and the management of special landscapes.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| To realise this vision we need to: | 1. Maintain the existing rights of way network to a high standard (seeking constant improvement)  
2. Improve path links so that the countryside is accessible directly from where people live, work and visit, to provide circular routes, and to link between communities  
3. Improve links to create safe routes for both leisure and utility journeys, by minimising the need to cross and use busy roads  
4. Provide a path network that enables appropriate access without barriers for as many people and different types of users as possible  
5. Promote countryside access opportunities to all sections of the community to enable people to confidently use and enjoy the countryside responsibly |
## South Downs (Hampshire) Countryside Access Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vision</th>
<th>Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To provide local residents and visitors to this part of Hampshire with sustainable access to this distinctive and protected landscape. In particular, the CAP for the South Downs (Hampshire) should aim to ensure that access opportunities, both new and existing:</td>
<td>1. There is a high reliance on cars and availability of car parking to get into the South Downs area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Provide a high quality network and facilities suitable for the recreational needs of the 21st century</td>
<td>2. The quality of path surfaces is generally good in the area overall, however surface conditions are poor in certain localised areas due to geology and levels of use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Excite and invite exploration and appreciation of the special qualities of the area</td>
<td>3. There is a limited supply of easily accessible, inviting routes in the area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Are managed in a way that balances the needs of recreational users with the protection of the environment and working landscape within the area</td>
<td>4. There is a lack of awareness and understanding of each other’s needs among those who use and manage the countryside access network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Provide links directly into the area from adjacent settlements to encourage car-free recreation</td>
<td>5. Countryside access users are forced to use or cross busy roads to link up off-road access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Support sustainable tourism in ways that uphold and reinforce the unique qualities of the South Downs as an area for self-discovery and refreshment rather than for mass tourism</td>
<td>6. There is a need for more circular routes for all users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Public access can create difficulties for land managers and landowners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. There is a lack of affordable and appropriate visitor accommodation in the South Downs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Many users would like to see more detailed information about the routes they are following</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.0 Current Management

2.1 Administrative arrangements

The South Downs Way is managed by a partnership of Natural England, the South Downs Joint Committee, and the three County Councils; East Sussex, West Sussex and Hampshire. These bodies are represented on the South Downs Way Steering Group. The South Downs Way National Trail Officer oversees the strategic management of the National Trail, liaising with all the partner organisations and other stakeholders to ensure that the Trail maintains a high profile, is maintained to the National Trail Standards and has the resources necessary to implement this plan.

Natural England has the power under the National Parks and access to the Countryside act 1949 to identify National Trails, but they do not have a statutory duty to maintain these Trails. The County Councils (as Highway Authorities) have a duty, under the Highways Act, to maintain the Rights of Way network to a useable standard, but again, have no statutory duty to achieve the higher standard of access provision that National Trails aspire to. Therefore the current funding and administrative arrangements are in place due to a historical and a moral duty by both Natural England (and its predecessors) and the Highway Authorities to provide a service to the Public.

The South Downs Way Officer manages a budget for the maintenance and enhancement of the National Trail and reports to the Steering Group.

This budget is made up of contributions from Natural England, the SDJC (using a portion of the funding from both East and West Sussex County Councils given to the SDJC to carry out its delegated responsibility for rights of way maintenance.), Hampshire County Council and other grant funding when appropriate. The SDW Officer administered a budget of little over £100,000 in the year 2007–2008; of this about 1/3 was used to cover core operating costs, most of the remaining funding was used for Trail maintenance and matched with funding from the Partners. The South Downs Way Officer is the only person employed solely with a SDW remit.

2.2 Practical delivery

In Sussex four SDJC Area Teams and the South Downs Volunteer Ranger Service deliver practical action on the ground, with financial support from the SDW Officer. These Countryside Management teams deliver both access, habitat and landscape works across the Sussex Downs AONB, including the SDW Corridor.

In Hampshire, the SDJC Hampshire team and the South Downs Volunteer Ranger Service deliver Landscape and general countryside management. However rights of way management is still undertaken by Hampshire County Council; three rights of way area teams cover the SDW corridor in Hampshire. Again this work is financially supported by the SDW Officer.

All three Highway Authorities carry out the legal function for rights of way including creation, realignment and enforcement issues.
2.0 Current Management

Large capital restoration or improvement works are also still carried out by the relevant Highway Authority.

The South Downs has a thriving Volunteer Ranger Service that carries out on average over 1000 work days along the SDW corridor annually, including vegetation control, RoW furniture repairs and installations, landscape and habitat improvements and surveying. In addition, across the whole of the SDW, survey, monitoring and minor repair works are also carried out by SDW Voluntary Wardens; these dedicated volunteers are part of the SDVRS but take on special responsibilities along the SDW corridor.

Other individual projects and corridor management is also delivered by external partners and individuals including private landowners, Local Authority landowners, National Trust, Wildlife Trusts, South Downs Society, small conservation groups and trusts etc. often with the support of the SDW Officer.

2.3 Promotion and information

The SDW currently has its own section of pages on the National Trails website. Day to day management and up dating of the SDW pages is carried out but the SDW Officer. The site currently has 82 pages of information including maps, photo gallery, virtual tours, an extensive accommodation database with over 200 entries and a vast quantity of information to help visitors plan their trip. In 2007 the site received over 12,000 visits per month and is the major source of information for many SDW users.

In addition to this there is currently a printed introductory leaflet, a Public Transport Guide, a Mountain biking guide, an accommodation guide and a set of 5 circular walks leaflets, one of which is currently out of print. An annual SDW Certificate of Completion is also available.

Numerous books and guides to the SDW exist, but the SDW Officer only has an input into the official SDW Guide book published by Aurum Press under contract from Natural England. However, all books are private commercial ventures.

Walkers at Beachy Head, East Sussex © Andy Gattiker
2.0 Current Management

South Downs Way National Trail Management Plan 2009-2014
2.4 Current users

South Downs Way users can be grouped into two categories; Long Distance Users, who spend at least one night on the Trail, and Short Distance Users or day users who do not.

Accurate user numbers are not available – such statistics are notoriously difficult and expensive to collect – and the last comprehensive visitor survey was carried out in 1996/97 and published in 2000. Further small-scale sample surveys carried out in 2003, 2005 and 2007 provide a snapshot of users' views but have no quantitative data (the survey was carried out on all English National Trails, and the data is statistically significant only when aggregated nationally). However, the recent Visitor Survey of the proposed South Downs National Park 2003 – 2004 provides a great deal of relevant information since most visitors to the South Downs will spend at least some time on the South Downs Way.

The current “best guess” is that there are around 20,000 long distance user visits on the Trail each year. This estimate is given some measure of objective credibility by the observation that there are known to be just over 2,000 LDUs involved in charity events on the Trail each year.

Around 20 million visits per year are short distance users of the South Downs Way, with a high proportion of these being local users. Assuming that about two thirds of the 33 million visits to the South Downs AONB each year spend at least some time on the Trail, which seems very likely, as it runs through all the main honey-pot sites. The use of the South Downs Way is likely to be much higher than most other rights of way on the Downs.

It is also estimated that around 20% of both the Long Distance users and day users of the South Downs Way are mountain bikers.

According to a recent British Equestrian Trade association survey, 7% of the British population regularly ride horses. Another similar survey within the Kent Downs AONB concluded that 12% of the resident population regularly rode. Assuming a similar percentage ride in the South Downs, it is reasonable to estimate that around 13,800 riders regularly use the SDW. This is probably a conservative figure as it does not take into account the thousands of people from the surrounding urban areas that travel to the South Downs to ride or box their horses from further afield.

Walkers on the Downs © Joe Low / Natural England
3.0 Identifying assets, opportunities and needs

3.1 Review of the 2000–2005 Management Strategy

A full review of the 2000 – 2005 SDW Management Strategy has been completed and is available as a separate supporting document. The review identifies areas of work that were successfully completed, still need to be completed, or were no longer required during the term of the last strategy.

There were 61 Actions outlined in the 2000 – 2005 strategy and on the whole most of those actions have either been completed, significant progress made or are ongoing areas of work that are required annually.

This review helped to highlight areas of work that need to be carried forward to this new Plan.

The following 2000 – 2005 Actions that require further work and should therefore be considered for inclusion in this plan are listed below (regular or annual work is not listed).

- Implement changes to ensure correct legal route is recorded
- Implement the finalisation of the permanent route in Hampshire
- Consider the need for vehicle management measures where necessary for public safety
- Carry out a full condition survey of the SDW, and produce a full report
- Develop a consistent policy towards the use of signposts and waymarks in relation to type and location
- Liaise with public transport providers to ensure that the use of public transport is maximised
- Landscaping of car parks will be encouraged to minimise their impact without compromising crime prevention.
- Produce a leaflet(s) promoting safe routes for easy access, giving sufficient information for the Trail to permit individual choices to be made
- Identify the main linking paths from the SDW with the potential to create circular routes, and improve and promote them as required
- Identify, in conjunction with partner organisations, suitable locations for additional water points, hitching posts, and secure bicycle parking and implement
- Work with the YHA and others to identify sites for potential new hostels or bunkhouse barns
- To continue to monitor the possibility of setting up a Visitor Payback scheme to raise awareness of the need for sustainable approaches to tourism
3.0 Identifying assets, opportunities and needs

3.2 Stakeholders consultation

A series of four separate consultation workshops were held during 2006. Groups involved included the South Downs Local Access Forum (LAF) the Countryside Access Forum for West Sussex and Brighton & Hove LAF, the SDW Voluntary Wardens, the SDW Steering Group and the staff of the South Downs Joint Committee. These consultations were designed to provide the local “bottom up” input to compliment the nationally driven “top down” Quality Standards. Participants were encouraged to think holistically rather than simply representing their own interest group.

In essence the consultation meetings had three components – each participant listed his or her own priorities for the Trail, these were then grouped into issues and the issues were prioritised by the workshop as a whole. Discussion groups were formed to look at the issues that had been identified as most pressing and suggestions for solutions made.

The number of people who raised an issue, multiplied by the priority rating given to each issue by the workshop as a whole, gives a measure of the overall importance attached to each topic. Using this methodology the key issues emerged as shown. The issues identified on the right should be used with caution, as some are generic issues affecting the South Downs as a whole rather than the SDW specifically.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility for all (social inclusion, disability, etc)</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture (gates/stiles/benches)</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Path surfacing</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signage and information provision</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car parks and public transport</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety/ road crossings</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management &amp; protection of the landscape</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolve conflicts between user groups</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shortage of low cost accommodation</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management &amp; protect of Heritage (wildlife, biodiversity and archaeology)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement permanent routes where temporary routes currently exist. (Low rating probably affected by the knowledge that this is in hand)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote and maintain important link routes</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase availability of drinking water points.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events – ensuring good practice</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A full report detailing the outcomes of the stakeholder’s consultations is available as a separate supporting document.
3.0 Identifying assets, opportunities and needs

3.3 Current issues

The following are some of the key issues affecting the SDW that will need to be addressed if the vision is to be realised. They have been identified from the review of the 2000 strategy, stakeholder consultations shown above, user feedback and officer knowledge. The issues listed are those considered most pressing but not every issue affecting the SDW can be listed here. They are in no order of priority.

**Issue 1: Insufficient resources**

The current funding available for the management and enhancement of the SDW is only just sufficient to cover basic maintenance of existing infrastructure; it is not adequate to carry out major surfacing repairs or improvements. Improvement and development works needed to realise the Vision require greater resources. Applying for additional external funding is time consuming, stretching already over stretched staff. New development work would need additional staffing resources.

> “Each year around 30% of the planned work programme has to be dropped due to insufficient resources” SDW Officer, (May 2008)

**Issue 2: Temporary routes**

The SDW currently has a number of temporary routes until permanent routes can be agreed. These temporary routes can be confusing to the users and do not always follow the preferred line.

> “I just wanted to confirm that the SDW cycle route went past Old Winchester Hill. Could you clear the confusion please?” SDW User (June 2008)

**Issue 3: Inconsistent signage**

The South Downs Way is marked using the nationally adopted symbol for National Trails; The Acorn. However, the use of the Acorn symbol is not consistent along the Trail, the style of signposts varies and the information displayed in signposts also varies. To provide clear and consistent signage to the users of the SDW must be a basic requirement if the vision for the Trail is to be realised.

> “Some signs had mileages on most did not, would have liked to see more mileages on SDW signs.” SDW Users, (May 2008)

**Issue 4: Illegal use**

In certain locations the SDW suffers from disturbance and damage from a variety of illegal activities. Illegal or irresponsible motor vehicle use is a problem in some localised areas and innovative ways of combating the problem need to be found if legitimate users are not to suffer. Access restrictions to parking areas in response to illegal
3.0 Identifyng assets, opportunities and needs

traveller encampments have seriously limited the availability of horsebox parking along the SDW restricting equestrians use of the Trail.

“The existing level of horsebox parking is very poor, as many of the parking areas now have height barriers and are therefore unavailable for use” British Horse Society, (Jan, 2008)

Issue 5: Lack of close short stay accommodation

In many parts of the SDW there is a lack of close affordable short stay accommodation. SDW users generally need overnight accommodation for one night at a time, which is not available at many places. Camping facilities are particularly lacking, especially in Hampshire and this leads to unauthorised wild camping along the Trail. The problem is compounded by the closure of both Winchester and Eastbourne Youth Hostels.

“A general lack of accommodation; expensive in places. Lack of accommodation and food on the walk means long deter away on the Trail” SDW User, (May 2008)

Issue 6: Road crossings and road sections of the SDW

The SDW is for the most part along rights of way not open to vehicular traffic, but there are a few short sections where the Trail uses country lanes. Although these lanes have relatively low traffic volumes, sight lines and vehicles speeds make these sections uncomfortable for users. There are currently 13 road crossings including eight A road crossings where improvements must be sought to provide the safest and most enjoyable experience possible for users.

“The crossing of the A24 near Washington is far too dangerous: and so is the end of the alternative route. Even the crossing of the A283 near Botolphs and the A32 near Exton aren’t that safe. Maybe a bridge like the one over the A26 would solve the problem?” SDW user, (May 2008)

Issue 7: Accessing the Trail

It does not matter how good the South Downs Way is if users can’t access it easily. Work was started a few years ago to identify and waymark key routes from public transport points and villages to the SDW, but many key routes remain unmarked and under managed. This prevents users from using public transport or walking and riding to and from the Trail.

“How can I access the SDW from Petersfield? Is there an easy route from the train station, is the SDW easy to find?” SDW user, (April 2008)

Issue 8: Defining start & end points

At both the Winchester and Eastbourne ends of the South Downs Way a lack of well defined start/finish points make for difficult navigation to the start or an anticlimax at the finish. Well-defined easily accessible single end points are needed to reinforce the special qualities of the Trail and make users confident of finding the start points.

“We started in Eastbourne where there is a board to mark the start of the SDW (Now destroyed by a vehicle.) It would be nice to have something like that at Winchester.” SDW User, (May 2008)
3.0 Identifying assets, opportunities and needs

3.4 Current assets

The following are identified assets and special qualities of the South Downs Way that this Management Plan should ensure are retained and expanded. The SDW Officer, stakeholders and users of the Trail have identified these assets.

Asset 1: A multi user route

The South Downs Way is one of very few long distance routes that can be enjoyed by a wide range of user. Walkers, horse riders and mountain bikers can complete the entire journey from Winchester to Eastbourne. Some sections can also be enjoyed by carriage drivers, and a few by off road motor vehicles. There are also sections that can be easily enjoyed by users in wheelchairs and young families with buggies.

“Every time I ride on the SDW I am struck at how well it works as a busy multi-user route. No matter whom I meet, everyone pleasantly passes the time of day and respect’s each others right to be there and enjoy it.” Member of Hants & West Sussex Borders Bridleways Group (Jan 2008)

Asset 2: An easy to follow route

On the whole, the South Downs Way can be navigated without the need for a map and personal navigation skills. This makes it ideal for newcomers to outdoor pursuits.

“In general we were impressed with the signposting and barely had to refer to the maps.” SDW User (May 2008)

Issue 9: Lack of one unified database recording the condition of the SDW

In order to maintain and report on the condition of the National Trail and the progress of this Plan, a system of reporting needs to be in place across the whole of the Route. Currently, condition recording in Hampshire and Sussex is not unified making reporting difficult.

“National Trail Quality Standards are assessed and reported annually, the absence of one single condition database makes this task almost impossible.” SDW Officer, (May 2008)

Issue 10: Route alignment issues

There are a number of areas where the legal line of the Right of Way varies from the line of the National Trail or the line used by the public. This can cause confusion to both users and to route managers. It also causes potential problems with funding where the used route is not on the line of the Right of Way. There are currently 8 identified route anomalies of this type.


3.0 Identifying assets, opportunities and needs

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3.0 Identifying assets, opportunities and needs

Asset 3: Easily accessible
Running along a ridge of tranquil Downland but through one of the busiest parts of the British Isles, the Trail remains within easy reach of millions of people, providing them with quality access to the countryside. The extensive rights of way network allows easy access to the Trail from surrounding areas and good public transport links at both ends and at numerous points along the Way help all visitors to reach the SDW.

“There are a great many riders who use their local part of the SDW on a very regular basis.” Hants & West Sussex Borders Bridleway Group. (Jan 2008)

Asset 4: Running through one of Britain’s finest landscapes
The SDW runs the entire length of both the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and East Hampshire Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty though an iconic English landscape. When questioned, 37% of people cited the landscape as their primary reason for using the South Downs Way.

“A Fantastic experience the epitome of the English Countryside.” SDW User (April 2008)

Asset 5: Utilising wide and open tracks
The use of open tracks and wide routes along much of the Trail, unrestricted by high hedges, enclosed woodland and double fencing allows users to enjoy and feel part of the landscape, rather than just catching glimpses of a hidden out of reach world. These wide-open routes also allow different users to enjoy the SDW with little conflict.

“What a fantastic asset, wonderful views practically the whole way. Even the big cities look rather good from on high! Peace and quiet, wildlife, other users who invariably were cheery, must be the place. A great track, it would be boring if it were better and it doesn’t need to be. There are plenty of sections of excellent surface for those who prefer it.” SDW User

Asset 6: Easily accessible information
The availability of free easily available information allows a wide variety of users to explore the South Downs Way with confidence, ensuring they get the most from their trip.

“The website and the leaflets that you sent me have been fantastically helpful, thank you.” SDW User, May 2008

Disabled ramblers on the SDW, heading toward Amberley © B. Jenman / Natural England
4.1 Strategic aims

Four strategic aims have been developed following the review of the SDW Management Strategy 2000-2005, the stakeholders’ consultations and the need to meet the National Trail Quality Standards. Fulfilling these aims should move us towards realising the ‘Vision’ for the South Downs Way. The four strategic aims are:

- **Managing the Trail and its corridor;** to ensure the physical infrastructure of the South Downs Way and its strategic link routes are managed to the highest standards and to progressively improve the environmental and cultural quality of the landscape which Trail users experience.

- **Promoting the South Downs Way and providing information for Trail users;** to assist and encourage potential Trail users in planning their trips and especially realise the potential of the South Downs Way. To introduce new audiences to the countryside in general and the Rights of Way network in particular.

- **Maximising the social and economic benefits of the Trail;** to ensure that the South Downs Way brings the maximum benefit to the local economy and community wellbeing, including, but not limited to the tourist and farming industries in Sussex and Hampshire.

- **Addressing sustainability;** to ensure that the potential of the South Downs Way, to encourage more environmentally sustainable lifestyles is maximised, and seek to minimise the adverse impacts of Trail use and management.

Fulking escarpment © Wynne McCoy / Natural England
4.0 Future Direction

4.2 Management objectives

The management objectives are the statements of ‘where we want to be’ by the end of this Management Plan and together they should ensure that the Strategic aims are delivered.

Managing the Trail and its corridor

- The measured National Trail Quality Standards are reached and where possible improved.
- The SDW is managed to enable access for as wide a range of legitimate users as is reasonably practicable.
- The surrounding access network is utilised and well maintained to allow easy access too and from the South Downs Way.
- There are adequate facilities appropriate to the site for all users, including horsebox parking, accommodation, refreshments and drinking water points to allow users to enjoy the Trail to its full potential.
- The South Downs Way corridor is of the highest environmental quality, with the landscape, habitats, and cultural archaeological features managed to maximise their environmental value and to enhance local character.
- The South Downs Way corridor is protected from deterioration and inappropriate development and use.

Promoting the South Downs Way and providing information to Trail users

- Potential users of the SDW have access to all the information they need to plan their trip in a variety of media and languages.
- The landscape and features along the SDW corridor are interpreted and celebrated through innovative, non-intrusive media, both on and off the Trail in order to increase peoples awareness and widen their experience of the landscape through which there are passing.
- Recreational pressure on the Trail and surrounding corridor is recognised and promotion material is used to encourage the use and enjoyment of the less pressured areas of the South Downs Way and surrounding network.
- The threats and opportunities of large events on the SDW and the surrounding network is recognised and are managed to minimise potential adverse effects and build on opportunities.
- A wide range of users are enabled and encouraged to use, experience and enjoy the South Downs Way, through education and provision of accessible and appropriate information and by building the confidence of novice path users.
- The South Downs Way enjoys a high profile locally, nationally and internationally, amongst users and policymakers.
Maximising the social and economic benefits of the Trail

- The South Downs Way provides significant social, health and wellbeing benefits to local users and visitors, through use and enjoyment of the Trail itself, and the wider access and recreational opportunities along it.
- The use of the South Downs Way as a tool for developing the visitor economy is supported and encouraged.
- Users of the South Downs Way have readily accessible information about local services and attractions near to the Trial.
- The South Downs Way plays an important part in developing and promoting opportunities to enhance the region’s farming, local food and tourism sectors and users of the SDW understand how farming supports the South Downs landscape.

Addressing sustainability

- The South Downs Way is widely recognised as a key regional asset that contributes to the region’s appeal as a destination for businesses and visitors.

- The South Downs Way is at the forefront of environmentally responsible tourism and recreation.
- Local, sustainable or recycled materials and local contractors are used in preference to ‘imported’ materials and services when maintaining or improving the Trail.
- Public transport integrated with safe walking, cycling and riding routes are a convenient and reliable way to access the South Downs Way for both local people and visitors and is promoted above the use of cars.
5.1 The Action Plan

The Actions outlined in the plan below are the areas of work and projects that are planned over the coming years which will move us closer to our Objectives outlined above.

The Action Plan will be split into four main areas of work under the four Strategic Aims; Managing the Trail and its corridor, Promoting the South Downs Way and providing information to Trail users, Maximising the social and economic benefits of the Trail, and Addressing sustainability. At the start of each of these sections, the key policies from other regional strategies that could help deliver or support the actions of the SDW will be listed.

Key partners have been identified for most of the Actions. Many already work in partnership with the National Trail, but inclusion does not commit partners to deliver; nor is the list of partners exhaustive. Key partners are listed to highlight those that are likely to be important if delivery of the Actions are to be successful.

The Issues and Assets, along with the relevant National Trail Quality Standards and South Downs Management Plan Policies, are listed, to show how each Action helps to address the needs and policies of the South Downs.

The table also highlights the resources that are likely to be required to deliver the actions. Resources, both officer’s time and funding, are only listed if it is expected that additional resources will be needed to deliver the actions. If action is expected over several years the resources needed will be the total over the five year life-time of this plan.

The symbols used are listed below.

**Staff**

- Some required (possibly using existing staff but will need to wait until staff have capacity)
- Significant increase required (up to one full time equivalent new member of staff)
- Major increase required (More than one full time equivalent staff member required)

**Funding**

- less than £5,000
- £5,000 – £25,000
- £25,000 – £100,000
- more than £100,000
5.0 The Action Plan

5.2 Managing the Trail and its corridor

**Key strategies to which this Action Plan contributes.**
Natural England Strategic Direction 2006 - 2009; A Healthy Natural Environment; Enjoyment of the Natural environment
East Sussex Rights of Way Improvement Plan; Aims 1, 2, 3, 4
West Sussex Rights of Way Improvement Plan; Actions 1, 2, 3, 4
South Downs (Hampshire) Countryside Access Plan; Issues 2, 3, 8 & 9

**Other strategies to which this Action Plan contributes.**

**Performance Targets** (Progress to be assessed annually; targets to be met by the end of this plan, unless stated otherwise)

1. The percentage of the Trail that is traffic free and off road is increased from the 2007 91% figure.
3. At least 95% of SDW signage that meets the National Trails Quality Standards.
4. All temporary SDW routes to be replaced by permanent routes by 2014.
5. Increase the number of accessible drinking water taps from 11 available in 2008.

View from SDW near Jack and Jill windmills © Andy Gattiker
## 5.0 The Action Plan

The measured National Trail Quality Standards are reached and where possible to improved upon.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Key Partners</th>
<th>Relates to Issues/Assets</th>
<th>National Trail Quality Standard</th>
<th>South Down Management Plan link</th>
<th>Resources required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Continuing to work towards achieving Quality Standards for National Trails for the route, furniture and signage.</td>
<td>SDJC, HCC</td>
<td>Issues 3, 10 Assets 2, 3, 5</td>
<td>1-20, 25-28 45-51</td>
<td>P8.9, P8.12, P8.13, P8.15</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Carry out at least one full condition survey annually and report on NT Quality Standards and performance targets.</td>
<td>SDJC, SDVRS</td>
<td>Issue 9</td>
<td>1-20, 25-28 45-51</td>
<td>P8.15</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Produce an agreed SDW Signage and Waymarking Policy for the whole Trail including East Sussex, West Sussex &amp; Hampshire.</td>
<td>SDWSG, HA's</td>
<td>Issue 3</td>
<td>45-51</td>
<td>P8.13</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Encourage and develop volunteering along the SDW and its corridor by SDW Wardens, SDVRS, the Youth Ranger scheme and other volunteers.</td>
<td>SDJC, SDVRS</td>
<td>Issue 1 Asset 3</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>P9.15, P9.16</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Seek off road alternatives or improvements to remaining on road sections, including Butser Hill, Preshaw to Milburys and Washington.</td>
<td>HCC, WSCC</td>
<td>Issue 6 Asset 5</td>
<td>4, 5</td>
<td>P8.14</td>
<td>£££</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Seeking to further improve the safety of South Downs Way road crossings wherever possible.</td>
<td>HA's</td>
<td>Issue 6</td>
<td>6, 7, 8</td>
<td>P1.16</td>
<td>£££££</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Complete the permanent route for the South Downs Way in Hampshire (Meon Valley &amp; Winchester approach)</td>
<td>HCC, NE</td>
<td>Issue 2</td>
<td>1, 2, 3 53, 54</td>
<td>P8.14</td>
<td>£££££</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Investigate all route anomalies and work with the relevant landowners and HA's to resolve them.</td>
<td>HA's, Landowners</td>
<td>Issue 10</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>P8.12</td>
<td>£                  (£2k per year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Action</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Apply the ‘least restrictive access’ principle to all work on the South Downs Way, meeting the highest possible access standards ensuring that wherever possible step stiles are removed and all gates meet British Standards.</td>
<td>SDJC, HCC</td>
<td>Issue 7 Asset 1, 3</td>
<td>12, 20, 27</td>
<td>P3.10, P8.9</td>
<td>££</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Seek to increase the level and distribution of horse box parking</td>
<td>LA’s, Landowners</td>
<td>Issue 4</td>
<td>30, 34</td>
<td>P8.7</td>
<td>££ 1££</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Seek to improve access to the SDW for carriage drivers and mobility-impaired people through collaborative projects with landowners.</td>
<td>Landowners, User groups</td>
<td>Asset 1, 3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>P8.14, P8.9</td>
<td>££ ££</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The SDW is managed to enable access for as wide a range of non motorised users as is reasonably practicable.

The surrounding access network is utilised and well maintained to allow easy access to and from the South Downs Way.

| 12  | Maintain and where appropriate expand the SDW promoted links paths, identifying a clear network of strategic link routes. | User groups, Parishes         | Issue 7 Asset 3              | 31                              | P8.14, P8.15         | ££ 1££             |
| 13  | Maintain close working links with the wider rights of way network managers to take advantage of joint working and funding opportunities when they arise. | SDJC, ESCC, WSCC, HCC, BHCC   | Issue 7 Asset 3              | 31                              | P8.15               |                    |
## 5.0 The Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Support the provision of more visitor accommodation, especially low cost accommodation, in areas with low provision, provided it is not in conflict with landscape &amp; sustainability issues.</td>
<td>Landowners, YHA, Private companies.</td>
<td>Issue 5</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>P2.8, P5.14 P5.15, P7.11 P7.17, P7.18</td>
<td>£££</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Seek to provide more SDW water points along the route that are accessible 24hrs/ day, especially in Hampshire and maintain existing.</td>
<td>Landowners</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>P8.9, P8.13</td>
<td></td>
<td>£££</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Install seating at appropriate points along the Trail to allow users to rest and take in the landscape, but only where existing development or landscape permits.</td>
<td>Landowners</td>
<td>3, 24</td>
<td>P8.9, P8.13</td>
<td></td>
<td>£ £</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The South Downs Way corridor is of the highest environmental quality, with the landscape, habitats, and cultural/archaeological features managed to maximise their environmental value and to enhance local character.

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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Continue to promote and support landscape and nature conservation enhancements along the Trail.</td>
<td>NE, SDJC</td>
<td>Asset 4</td>
<td>21-24</td>
<td>P2.1, P4.1, P4.2, P4.5, P4.11</td>
<td>£££</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Ensure that agri-environment schemes are utilised and targeted to deliver habitat and historic environment benefits along the SDW corridor.</td>
<td>NE, SDJC</td>
<td>Asset 4</td>
<td>21-24</td>
<td>P2.1, P2.5 P4.2, P6.3</td>
<td>£ £</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Explore additional sources of funding to deliver cultural heritage and biodiversity improvements along the SDW corridor.</td>
<td>LTCS, EH</td>
<td>Issue 1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>P2.1, P2.5, P4.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Respond to any planning application or strategic consultation that impacts on the SDW and its corridor and wider views.</td>
<td>SDJC</td>
<td>Asset 4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>P1.4, P3.1, P7.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Work with Local Authorities, the police and countryside management staff to prevent unlawful flytipping, traveller encampments, motor vehicle use and developments.</td>
<td>SDJC, LA's, Police, Landowners</td>
<td>Asset 4</td>
<td>24, 35</td>
<td>P1.1, P1.8, P1.9, P1.10, P8.16</td>
<td>£</td>
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The South Downs Way corridor is protected from deterioration and inappropriate development.
5.3 Promoting the South Downs Way and providing information to Trail users

Key strategies to which this Action Plan contributes.
Natural England Strategic Direction 2006 - 2009; A Healthy Natural Environment, Enjoyment of the Natural environment
East Sussex Rights of Way Improvement Plan; Aims 4 & 5
West Sussex Rights of Way Improvement Plan; Action 5
South Downs (Hampshire) Countryside Access Plan; Issues 5, 7 & 10

Other strategies to which this Action Plan contributes.

Performance Targets (Progress to be assessed annually; targets to be met by the end of this plan, unless stated otherwise)

6. Trail end features in place at each end of the SDW by 2014.
7. Two new promoted walks added to the suite of SDW walks available from the SDW website per annum.
8. The SDW is promoted at, at least 6 events annually.
9. Respond to all requests for help, advise and information within 5 working days.

Newtimber Hill from Devil’s Dyke © SDJC
### 5.0 The Action Plan

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Maintain the Quality Standards for National Trails for the interpretation materials and signage.</td>
<td>SDJC, HCC</td>
<td>Issue 3 Asset 3</td>
<td>36-54</td>
<td>P2.5, P8.13 P8.15</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Maintain and improve the website and its underlying database as a source of useful and accurate information. Make available more web pages in different languages.</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>Asset 6</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>P8.2, P10.1 P10.2, P10.11</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Investigate the potential for on-line shopping to sell maps, guides and souvenirs to raise awareness of the SDW and generate income.</td>
<td>SDJC, NE</td>
<td>Issue 1 Asset 3</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>P10.4</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Developing more web based, downloadable information to encourage new users without the costs of keeping ever more leaflets in print.</td>
<td>SDJC, HCC, User groups</td>
<td>Asset 6</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>P8.9</td>
<td>££</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Work with publishers and authors to ensure that guidebooks and maps are as accurate and up to date as possible.</td>
<td>Publishers</td>
<td>Asset 6</td>
<td>38, 39</td>
<td>P10.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Evaluate the pilot pod-cast project in Hampshire and expand the model to other areas of the SDW if appropriate.</td>
<td>HCC, SDJC</td>
<td>Asset 3</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>P2.5, P10.10</td>
<td>££</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Potential users of the SDW have access to all the information they need to plan their trip in a variety of media and languages.

The landscape and features along the SDW corridor are interpreted and celebrated through innovative, non-intrusive media, both on and off the Trail in order to increase peoples awareness and widen their experience of the landscape through which there are passing.
## 5.0 The Action Plan

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Encourage innovative interpretation and art projects along the SDW.</td>
<td>NTO</td>
<td>Asset 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>P10.4, P10.6</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Develop end of Trail features and interpretation to mark the start/end points of the SDW that make people think about the landscape.</td>
<td>WCC, HCC, EBC</td>
<td>Issue 8</td>
<td>29, 51</td>
<td>P10.2</td>
<td>££</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The recreational carrying capacity of the Trail and surrounding corridor is recognised and promotion material is used to positively influence the use and enjoyment of the South Downs Way.

| 30  | Maintain a suite of circular walks leaflets / cards and downloads to encourage visitors to explore other areas of the South Downs reducing pressure on the busiest places. | NTO, SDJC, HCC               | Asset 2, 3                 | 39                              | P8.11                          | ££                 |
| 31  | Work with the Mountain Biking industry to promote responsible cycling through the SDW cycling map and other media. | CTC IMBA                      | Issue 4 Asset 1           | 41                              | P8.19                          | £                  |

The threats and opportunities of large events on the SDW and the surrounding network is recognised and are managed to minimise potential adverse effects and build on opportunities.

| 32  | Update and distribute “Events Guidelines” to all known events organisers and maintain on the National Trail website | NTO, Event organisers        | Asset 1                   | 44                              | P8.21, P10.1                  | £                  |
| 33  | Maintain an events calendar on-line to allow all users and landowners to check forthcoming events and to prevent event clashes. | Event organisers             | Asset 1                   | 44                              | P8.21                          |                    |
## 5.0 The Action Plan

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Encourage school children and their families to explore the South Downs Way through partnership projects with education providers.</td>
<td>NTO, LA's</td>
<td>Asset 1</td>
<td>39, 44</td>
<td>P8.9, P10.6</td>
<td>£ £</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Encourage novice outdoor enthusiasts with a range of short and easy to follow routes, promoted on the website.</td>
<td>NTO</td>
<td>Asset 1</td>
<td>39, 44</td>
<td>P8.9</td>
<td>£ £</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Develop specific information for horse riders, carriage drivers and disabled people to increase the existing suite of general and cycling information.</td>
<td>NTO, BHS</td>
<td>Issue 4 Asset 1</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>P7.19</td>
<td>£ £</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The South Downs Way enjoys a high profile both locally, nationally and internationally.

| 37  | Working with local, county and regional tourism organisations to promote the Trail as an important attraction in the South Downs | NTO, TSE     | Asset 4                  | 36, 37, 44                     | P7.1, P7.14, P8.2            | £                  |
| 38  | Promoting the South Downs Way in the media and at events as the opportunity arises, and in particular through joint working with SDJC and HCC  | SDJC, HCC    | Asset 6                  | 36, 37, 44                     | P10.1, P10.4                | ££                 |
| 39  | Help to organise and promote a National Trails day to raise awareness of National Trails and their benefits nationally. | NE, Other NTO’s | Asset 4, 6               | 36                             | P10.1                         | £                  |
5.4 Maximising the social and economic benefits of the Trail

Key strategies to which this Action Plan contributes.
Natural England Strategic Direction 2006 - 2009; A Healthy Natural Environment, Enjoyment of the Natural environment, A secure environmental future.
East Sussex Rights of Way Improvement Plan; Aims 4
West Sussex Rights of Way Improvement Plan; Actions 2, 3, 4
South Downs (Hampshire) Countryside Access Plan; Issues 5 & 9

Other strategies to which this Action Plan contributes.

Performance Targets (Progress to be assessed annually; targets to be met by the end of this plan, unless stated otherwise)

10 Work with partners to promote healthy lifestyles through at least one new project per year.
11 Increase the number of SDW promoted link paths by the end of this plan.
12 Data from at least two people counters are maintained and collected each year.
13 A printed accommodation guide is available and never more than two years old.
### 5.0 The Action Plan

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The South Downs Way provides significant social, health and well being benefits to local users and visitors, through use and enjoyment of the Trail itself, and the wider access and recreational opportunities along it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Seek links with new partners to jointly further the healthy lifestyle agenda</td>
<td>SDJC, HCC, Heath Authorities</td>
<td>Asset 3</td>
<td>P10.9</td>
<td>£</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<th>Action</th>
<th>Resources required</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The use of the South Downs Way as a tool for developing the visitor economy is supported and encouraged.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Support tourism initiative such as Walkers and Cyclists Welcome.</td>
<td>TSE</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Commission a new visitor’s survey and economic impact assessment for the South Downs Way and continue to monitor user numbers through existing surveys and feedback forms.</td>
<td>NE, SDWVV, TSE</td>
<td>££</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Investigate any potential visitor ‘pay back’ schemes and implement if appropriate.</td>
<td>Accom providers</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Users of the South Downs Way have readily accessible information about local services and attractions near to the Trail.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Provide user friendly and up to date accommodation information</td>
<td>Accom providers</td>
<td>££</td>
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<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Services available at local towns and villages accessed by strategic link routes are advertised on the National Trail website along with maps showing users how to access the Trail from each village.</td>
<td>Parishes</td>
<td>Asset 3, 6</td>
<td>38, 44, 48</td>
<td>P7.9, P7.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>All identified strategic link routes have information on the Trail to inform users of the facilities available in the link village.</td>
<td>SDJC, HA's</td>
<td>Asset 3</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>P7.4</td>
<td>££</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The South Downs Way plays an important part in developing and promoting opportunities to enhance the region's farming, local food and tourism sectors and users of the South Downs Way understand how farming supports the South Downs landscape.

| 47  | Support and promote the sale and use of local produce where possible | Local producers |                             | P7.4                           |                   |                   |
| 48  | Develop innovative interpretation and themed events such as a SDW food and drink festival to make to link between farming and the Landscape | SDJC, HCC      | Asset 6                    | P7.4, P7.15                     | P10.2              | ££                |

The South Downs Way is widely recognised as a key regional asset that contributes to the region's appeal as a destination for businesses and visitors.

| 49  | Ensure that the SDW is included in regional business and tourism strategies. | VB, TSE       | Asset 4, 6                | P7.1                           |                   |                   |
| 50  | Install and collect usage data at a number of locations along the Trail to use as an evidence base and to help inform future work priorities. | Landowners SDJC | Issue 9                   | P10.1, P8.8                    | P8.21              | ££                |
5.5 Addressing sustainability

Key strategies to which this Action Plan contributes.

Natural England Strategic Direction 2006 - 2009; A Healthy Natural Environment, Enjoyment of the Natural environment, A secure environmental future, A sustainable use of the natural environment.

East Sussex Rights of Way Improvement Plan; Aim 3

West Sussex Rights of Way Improvement Plan; Actions 3

South Downs (Hampshire) Countryside Access Plan; Issues 1

Other strategies to which this Action Plan contributes.

Countryside Agency’s Diversity Review, Local Transport Plans, Local Development Frameworks

Performance Targets (Progress to be assessed annually; targets to be met by the end of this plan, unless stated otherwise)

14 Increase the number of Green Tourism Business Award holders promoted by the SDW each year.

15 SDW Public transport leaflet is updated and published annually.
## 5.0 The Action Plan

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Promote the Trail as an attractive holiday destination to UK residents, as an alternative to flying overseas</td>
<td>TSE</td>
<td>Asset 1, 3, 4, 6</td>
<td>P7.1, P7.14 P8.2</td>
<td></td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Encourage the use of sustainable and renewable technologies in all new and renovated accommodation and other visitor services facilities.</td>
<td>Landowners, LA’s</td>
<td></td>
<td>P2.8, P5.14 P5.15, P7.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Promote the Green Tourism Business Awards accreditation scheme and encourage SDW accommodation providers to join the scheme.</td>
<td>GTBA</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>P7.12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Local, sustainable or recycled materials and local contractors are always used in preference to ‘imported’ materials and services when maintaining or improving the Trail.

| 54  | Use local materials and local suppliers whenever possible for works along the Trail. Collate and maintain a list of local material suppliers and traditional craftsmen. | NTO          |                             | P2.15, P7.3                     |                                 | £                 |

Public transport is a convenient and reliable way to access the South Downs Way for both local people and visitors and is promoted above the use of cars.

| 55  | Encourage new public transport services where there are identified gaps in the network and where a market exists. | LA’s         | Issue 7                   | 29, 39                          | P8.4                            | ££                |
| 56  | Up date and publish a SDW Public Transport guide annually. | LA’s, Transport operators | Issue 7                   | 39                              | P8.4, P10.11                    |                   |
6.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

6.1 Partner delivery

The actions outlined in this plan are ambitious but realistic. However successful delivery will only be achieved by a committed partnership approach. Many of the actions will be co-ordinated by the National Trail Officer but ultimately delivered by the steering group partners as highway authorities and landscape managers.

The success of this Plan is also dependent on continued financial commitments from both Local Authorities and Natural England. Without continued support, especially from Natural England, this National Trail can not be maintained to its expected national standard, let alone developed as outlined in this document. Other funding partners and sources should always be pursued.

The commitment and enthusiasm of the many volunteers across the South Downs will also play an important and often invaluable role in delivering the expectations of this plan.

Lastly it should not be forgotten that this plan will also contribute toward significant delivery of other local, regional and national strategies, adding value to this work.

6.2 An evolving plan

Although the Strategic Aims and Management Objectives of this plan will guide the management of the South Downs Way, the specific actions outlined here should be subject to constant evaluation and amended if necessary, subject to updated guidance, best practice and of course resources. Projects should not be rejected because they are not included in this plan and likewise, projects within this plan should never be implemented if with current information they are found to be flawed or unjustified. The Management Plan should be a ‘guide’ to direct resources and encourage action.

6.3 Monitoring & evaluation

Most of the actions within this plan can be measured using the Quality Standards for National Trails measures which are assessed annually. Additional monitoring will be carried out, including reporting on the performance targets above to be published in an annual report to the Steering group and available online.
Appendix A – National Trail Quality Standards

The route

Our goal — to provide a path, routed through the finest landscapes, which is easily passable for as many people as is practical, which is safe and maintained sympathetically to its terrain and surroundings, and appropriately for its use. Given the nature of the landscape through which National Trails pass, an entirely level, firm network of paths will not be appropriate or reasonable but the user should expect to find:

A Alignment

1. A continuous linear route (except where a ferry is required to cross a river or estuary);
2. A route on legally defined public rights of way;
3. A route which is aligned to provide the user with the best views of the surrounding scenery and access to notable viewpoints and places of interest.

B Roads and crossings

4. A minimum use of metalled roads (i.e. only where there is no alternative);
5. No sections on busy or dangerous roads;
6. Safe crossing points where the route crosses metalled roads or railways;
7. A waiting area is provided where a bridleway crosses a metalled road and ‘Horse Crossing’ signs are erected to warn motorists;
8. Crossings of trunk and “A” roads by footbridges and underpasses where traffic levels and speeds require them;
9. Provision of necessary ferry services to cross rivers and estuaries and services which operate from April to September as a minimum (alternative routes for use when ferry is not operating being indicated). Where local circumstances dictate, ferry services should be accessible for disabled people. Where ferry services link sections of bridleway the ferry must be suitable for horses and pedal cycles;
10. Bridges on bridleways which do not have steps at either end, are constructed of non-slippery and non-echoing materials and are equipped with parapets (high parapets where the bridge carries a bridleway over a road);
11. Fords and bridges constructed so they are not hazardous to a walker or rider.

C Obstructions

12. A readily passable and unobstructed route (including freedom from the percentage of each Trail with undergrowth and overgrowth). An acceptable width.

D Surfaces

13. A well-managed, sustainable surface which is sympathetic to the landscape (a green sward is the surface of choice but we recognise that this is not always possible);
14. Minimal engineered paths in remote and wild locations;
15. Natural materials, used in places where artificial surfaces are unavoidable, that have been chosen so that they blend sympathetically in colour and texture and ecologically with their setting, and ideally have been obtained locally with recycled materials used where appropriate —
or, where other materials, such as geotextiles, have to be used, they are not visible even if erosion has started to occur;

16 Verges are managed, where roads are a necessary part of the route so there is an adequate refuge for a walker or rider encountering traffic.

17 At no point on a bridleway is the ground soft enough to allow a horse or cycle to sink deeply into it;

18 That, where it is legally permitted, off road vehicle use is regulated (using suitable management techniques) if it has a significant adverse impact on non-motorised trail users or on the path surface;

19 That, where there are no off road vehicle rights and where there are demonstrable problems, efforts are made to prevent illegal use by motorised recreational vehicles.

**E Steps**

20 The use of steps is kept to a necessary minimum gradients on each Trail that are (graded slopes are preferred).

**Trail corridor**

Our goal – to ensure the corridor through which the Trail passes is of the highest quality, with land adjacent to the Trail managed for the full benefit of the landscape and its habitats and heritage features and where inappropriate development is kept to a minimum. The user should expect to find:

**F Corridor management**

21 Intensive agriculture and intensive forestry is kept to a minimum;

22 Historic features conserved and well-managed;

23 The use of adjacent fencing only where essential for agricultural or security needs (wherever possible hedging, banking and walls should be used instead of fencing);

24 Their view unobstructed by inappropriate development or eyesores.

**Trail furniture**

Our goal – to ensure that Trail users have a safe, enjoyable experience that reflects the landscape in which they are travelling. The user should expect to find:

**G Quality design**

25 Consistent high quality design, style and use of materials to suit the character of the local landscape with historical features maintained where possible;

26 Furniture that is well-maintained, safe, comfortable, easy and convenient to use;

27 Least restrictive options used at all boundaries (eg. gaps where no stock control is required, but where stock or illegal use requires control then gates rather than stiles.) Kissing gates should allow sufficient clearance for a user with a backpack but should not be used where people using personal mobility vehicles or wheelchairs can access the path. Where stiles are unavoidable they should be accessible for dogs in accordance with agricultural needs;

28 Gates which can be opened and closed without the need for lifting and which are equally easy to open and close from either side. For bridleways, self-closing gates are preferred with catches which can be operated with one hand and reached from the saddle.
Services

Our goal - to help ensure that people using a National Trail have access to relevant services which complement their enjoyment of the Trail the user should expect to find:

H Access points

29 Principal starting, stopping and finishing points accessible by public transport;
30 Small, unobtrusive, informal car parks located close to the Trail at principal starting/stopping/finishing points which are not served by public transport;
31 Well-managed rights of way or permissive routes connecting the Trail to nearby settlements and services and usable for circular routes.

I Accommodation

32 Accommodation (also for horses where appropriate), camp sites and refreshment facilities available generally within one mile, but not more than 3 miles of principal starting, stopping and finishing points (a variety of accommodation - campsites, bunkhouses, hostels, bed and breakfast, hotels - should be available).

J Other services

33 Drinking water for public consumption and for horses and dogs available at convenient locations along each Trail or, in areas where this is not possible, information on distances to next watering point;
34 Parking for horseboxes, equipped with hitching posts, available near Trails which are available to horses (at farmsteads or other secure locations);
35 A Trail free of litter and dog mess (if receptacles are provided at honeypot locations they should be emptied regularly and frequently).

Information

Our goal - to ensure that easily identified information is available for each National Trail to enable people to plan and enjoy their experience. The user should expect to find:

K Branding

36 Information that is accurate, relevant, interesting and coordinated, carrying a consistent message presented in an appropriate form;
37 Details of contact points on all media to enable faults and incidents to be reported and to enable users to feedback comments on the Trail and its management.

L Mapping

38 The line of the Trail, including the location of refuge huts, marked accurately on Ordnance Survey maps;

M Print

NB Information should be made available in different languages and formats as local demand dictates.
39 Printed material for each Trail which includes an official guidebook, a Trail summary leaflet (which includes safety information and the location of other necessary services), an accommodation guide, a public transport guide, and a guide to circular walks based upon the Trail. Material should include contact details for more information;
A guide to the location of farriers, saddlers and vets if the Trail is promoted to horse riders;

A guide to the location of cycle repair and hire facilities if the Trail is promoted to pedal cyclists;

On sections of Trail legitimately used by motor vehicles, information warning other users of the likelihood of encountering them;

Guides to local history, geology, wildlife, archaeology and environmental education opportunities.

Online promotion

A fully accessible website presence for each Trail and for the family of National Trails. Material should include contact details for further information.

Signing

Our goal - to ensure the Trail is easy to follow with unobtrusive but clear signing. The user should expect to find:

Quality way marking

The Acorn logo on all signs and waymarks on the Trail;

Waymarking is colour coded in accordance with national guidelines to indicate the status of the route;

Directional posts, signed in both directions, bear the name of the Trail (abbreviated if necessary), the Acorn logo, the status of the route and, where they are located at principal access points, additional information about destinations and accurate distances;

Adjoining link paths signed ‘from’ and ‘to’ the National Trail in appropriate locations;

The design style is consistent and the materials used are sympathetic to the local landscape;

On remote sections of Trail, where the principal use is long-distance walking or riding, signing is provided only to the extent necessary to ensure public safety and guide users at key locations;

In honey pot areas, signing as recommended above is supplemented by additional signing at all starting, stopping and finishing points indicating villages, car parks, public transport links, other rights of way and other services.

Other signs

No misleading notices;

Temporary diversions clearly marked in advance and at the point of the diversion. Diversions should also be publicised on the Trail website and at local Tourist Information Centres;

Where there is a temporary diversion, the information is user-friendly and includes the length of time for which the diversion will apply.

Fulking escarpment © Wynne McCoy / Natural England