The South Downs Management Plan

This document is the statutory Management Plan for the nationally designated and protected landscape of the South Downs. It is a plan for all those that have a responsibility to look after this precious and treasured landscape.

The Draft Plan was subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment and to public consultation between June and October 2006. Responses were received from nearly 300 organisations and individuals. The revised Plan has been formally approved by the South Downs Joint Committee and the local authorities. It has been published with the assistance of the partners responsible for much of the Plan’s delivery.

The Partnership Action Plan, an integral part of the management framework for the South Downs detailing progress on the Management Plan’s targets, will be reported annually by the South Downs Joint Committee.

This Management Plan, the Strategic Environmental Assessment, the Partnership Action Plan, the State of the South Downs Report (which sets out the data underpinning the Management Plan) and the South Downs Planning Guidelines (adopted by the South Downs Joint Committee on 19th October 2007) can all be found on the South Downs Joint Committee website: www.southdownsonline.org

Enquiries about these documents can be made to the South Downs Joint Committee through the website or by telephone: 01243 558700.

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Front cover pic: Devil’s Dyke, East Sussex (WSCC/PPL); Inside back: Little Butser, East Hampshire (M. Williams/NE)
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A VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF THE SOUTH DOWNS

The 20-year VISION for the South Downs is of:

A landscape of the highest quality where the diversity of landscape character enjoyed at the turn of the 21st century has been retained and enriched, offering people the experience of natural beauty at its very best.

An area of sustainable mixed farming with extensive swathes of semi-natural species-rich chalk grassland accentuating the landform of the Downs and contrasting with wooded plateaux and ‘hangers’, and the extensive heathlands of the Greensand.

River valleys where management for biodiversity and flood alleviation has created extensive areas of semi-natural floodplain grassland.

An area where the coastlines function naturally, and managed realignment in response to climate change has resulted in the creation of salt marsh and coastal grazing marsh.

An area with unpolluted soils, air, and water, where the whole water cycle is managed for the benefit of people and the natural beauty of the South Downs.

An area that provides an escape from the pressures and disturbance of urban living, offering a profound sense of peace and serenity, with dark night skies.

A landscape devoid of visual clutter and intrusions that detract from the character of the landscape, with new buildings and structures displaying high standards of design complementing the landscape, reflecting the form and structure of existing settlements, responding to local vernacular styles and meeting the highest standards of energy and water efficiency in their design and use of materials.

An area where the historical evolution of the landscape is increasingly understood and where the archaeological and wider cultural resource are conserved and their settings managed to enhance sense of place.

An accessible and welcoming countryside for quiet enjoyment that excites and invites exploration, increasing understanding of the natural world, and offering opportunities and a different perspective for those excluded from enjoyment of the countryside.

An area with sustainable rural communities and economies, offering local employment for local people in harmony with the environment, and with a well-developed rural workforce with the skills and flexibility to manage the natural and cultural resources of the area.

An area where the market towns and larger villages provide a range of facilities and services for the wider rural area, including employment opportunities, and where development both conserves and enhances their historic character, individual identities and setting, and is sustainable in terms of design and location. An area where the focus of the local economy is on those businesses and activities that can provide an economic rationale for the conservation of natural beauty, with particular emphasis on green tourism and the development of land-based products produced to high environmental standards.

An area that is appreciated and loved by residents and visitors alike, where people are familiar with the issues that the area faces, and feel motivated to try to alter their life styles to bring real benefits for the conservation and enhancement of this special area.

An area that is looked up to nationally as a beacon of sustainability.
The aims of this Management Plan are:

- First and foremost, the protection, conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the South Downs
- Second, the promotion of opportunities for the understanding and quiet enjoyment of the area’s special qualities
- Third, the encouragement of sustainable forms of economic and community development in ways that help support the first two aims.

In delivering these aims, the South Downs should become a beacon for sustainability, innovation and best practice - an exemplar of what is possible – in one of the most pressured regions in the world. The Plan seeks to create a landscape of even greater quality and stronger resilience for future generations to enjoy: providing a resource whose benefits extend well beyond the boundary of the protected landscape.

The Management Plan aims require conservation and enhancement of natural beauty to lie at the heart of all decisions affecting the future of the South Downs. In the past some conservation decisions have been driven by a desire to minimise damage caused by change. This is simply not enough. Continued incremental but adverse change is eroding the special qualities of the South Downs. Positive enhancement is required, with economic and community activities working together in support of environmental conservation.
PART A

View from Fulking escarpment, West Sussex
INTRODUCTION

An area of national and international importance for its ‘natural beauty’

A.1.1 Under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 the landscape of the South Downs is recognised as nationally important for its ‘natural beauty’ – that is its landscape, wildlife, physical features and cultural heritage. Designated as two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in the 1960s, it has now been designated as the South Downs National Park (awaiting a decision on confirmation1).

A.1.2 The landscape is also of international importance, recognised as a Category V Protected Landscape by the World Conservation Union (IUCN). It is a cultural landscape, managed and nurtured by people over millennia. Those who manage the land are central to the future of this landscape. It is inevitable and appropriate that this cultural landscape will continue to evolve, but this needs to be in ways that conserve and enhance its special qualities.

The importance of this Management Plan

A.1.3 Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, it is a statutory requirement for all AONBs to have a Management Plan. This is the Management Plan for the South Downs2.

A.1.4 This is the single and most important Plan for the management of the protected landscape. As such, it sets out the strategic framework for the future of the area. It provides a clear expression of what society wants for the South Downs, making this more transparent for those who have an influence over the future of the area. It draws together relevant national, regional and local policies to create a single agenda for the South Downs. This should enable public investment, through national and local programmes, to be fully integrated and targeted for the benefit of the South Downs, improving local delivery and accountability of national and regional policy through a more coherent programme of action. (Further detail on the relationship between this Management Plan and other public policy is given in Appendices 1 and 2).

A.1.5 This Management Plan has been subject to, and informed by, a Strategic Environmental Assessment and extensive public consultation. The Plan is supported by more specific strategies and guidance including the non-statutory South Downs Planning Guidelines (revised 2007) and the South Downs Partnership Action Plan. These collectively form the full management policy context for the South Downs.

A.1.6 The policies of the Management Plan will be delivered principally through the South Downs Partnership Action Plan, which will be reviewed annually.

A shared responsibility for the future

A.1.7 Under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 it is a legal duty for all relevant authorities to “have regard to” the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty in all their decisions affecting nationally protected landscapes. These relevant authorities include all statutory undertakers and all tiers of government, including parish councils and holders of public office.

A.1.8 This is a Plan, therefore, for the geographic area of the South Downs and not for any single organisation. It is a Plan for all those whose decisions affect the natural beauty of the South Downs, either directly or indirectly, now and in the future, working in partnership to achieve the Vision.
Working in partnership to protect the South Downs
The extent of the South Downs

A.1.9 This Management Plan covers the contiguous areas of the Sussex Downs AONB and the East Hampshire AONB, together covering some 1,374 km² and extending from Winchester in the west to Eastbourne in the east. This is one of the largest areas of protected landscape in England. It also includes the dramatic chalk cliffs of the Heritage Coast between Seaford and Beachy Head.

A.1.10 Where appropriate, the Management Plan looks beyond the boundaries of the two AONBs, taking in the additional area of the proposed South Downs National Park. The National Park would have an area of 1,641 km² if the current designation boundary is confirmed (notwithstanding the recommendations of the Inspector that conducted the Public Inquiry). The plan will apply to the AONB areas until such times as the National Park is confirmed. Then the plan will apply to the confirmed National Park boundary subject to adoption by the National Park Authority.

A.1.11 This protected area offers some of the most spectacular and evocative landscapes in Southern England – sweeping chalklands, precipitous scarp slopes, rugged sandstone uplands, intimate clay vales and river valleys. It is a protected landscape of immense diversity and contrast, reflecting its varied geology. It also includes three important market towns – Petersfield, Midhurst and Petworth and, if the National Park boundary is approved, will include Arundel and Lewes.

A.1.12 Through the Management Plan, the whole of this protected landscape is referred to generically as the ‘South Downs’, while fully recognising the wealth of geological and landscape diversity of this nationally protected area.

Part of a wider family of protected landscapes

A.1.13 The South Downs forms part of a wider family of protected landscapes within England and Wales, consisting of 40 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and 11 National Parks plus the Norfolk Broads. Within the South East Region there are eleven AONBs (including the two AONBs that make up the South Downs) and one National Park (the New Forest) covering approximately 35.8% of this densely populated and economically thriving region – the highest proportion of any region in England. These landscapes are fundamental to the environmental character and quality of life of the South East and form a vital backcloth to its economic prosperity.

A PROTECTED LANDSCAPE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Sustainable development

A.2.1 Sustainable development lies at the heart of Government policy, therefore the principles of sustainable development have been woven into this Management Plan. Sustainable development is concerned with achieving a physical and natural environment that is protected and enhanced, where natural resources and energy are used as efficiently as possible; an economy that is innovative and productive with high levels of employment, and a society that promotes social inclusion and personal well-being.

The South Downs - enjoyed by all generations
A.2.2  In government guidance there is a clear expectation that the protected landscapes of England will make a strong contribution to both the local delivery of sustainable development and its wider promotion. In this context, the environment can be likened to a major public service that benefits us every day. The protected landscapes of England naturally form the pinnacles of this service, delivering a wide range of benefits essential for human survival and well-being, sometimes referred to as ‘ecosystem services’, not least delivering: the conservation of landscape, wildlife, cultural heritage and local ways of life; food and fresh water; the capturing of carbon; spiritual refreshment and inspiration; recreation; public health; education, and so on. The protected landscapes therefore can take a lead in delivering the four strategic outcomes desired by Natural England (1):

- A healthy natural environment: England’s natural environment will be conserved and enhanced
- Enjoyment of the natural environment: more people enjoying, understanding and acting to improve, the natural environment, more often
- Sustainable use of the natural environment: the use and management of the natural environment is more sustainable
- A secure environmental future: decisions which collectively secure the future of the natural environment

A.2.3  Under the UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy (2005) (2), caring for the environment is seen as a fundamental starting point of sustainable development, rather than attempting to deal with the consequences of environmental degradation. Living within environmental limits is a pre-requisite for the future. Working within environmental limits means not reaching a stage where the environment can no longer recover naturally, nor destroying those aspects of the environment that are finite or cannot be recreated. Within the South Downs, working within environmental limits means:

- Working with a strong evidence base that provides a sound understanding of place and environmental limits. This Plan is founded on a growing evidence base which is set out in the State of the South Downs Scoping Report. Monitoring of trends and change will be a shared activity.
- Ensuring that all decisions take account of climate change (see below).
- Taking an integrated approach by thinking of the environment, economy and community together. Within protected landscapes it is particularly important to identify, encourage and support those aspects of the local economy that can positively contribute to maintaining and enhancing natural beauty. The UK Sustainable Development Strategy makes it clear that a more sustainable future requires better integration between different areas of policy.
- Encouraging the integrated management of land that delivers multiple benefits such as protection of water resources, enhanced flood control, habitat creation, and landscape enhancement.
- Promoting landscape-scale responses that recognise that protection of the environment needs to permeate all aspects of land use rather than being considered on isolated sites. For example, protection of the water environment needs to be considered at a catchment scale, while landscape, habitat and wildlife conservation need to be planned across tracts of countryside if the environment of the South Downs is to have the capacity to buffer itself against the changes that await it over the coming centuries. A landscape scale response is required to give habitats, landscape features and the natural resources of air, soil and water the resilience to withstand change.
responses should also enable economies of scale, allowing cost-effective management.

A.2.4 In summary, we find a national imperative to embrace a more sustainable way forward, where the environment forms a central part in decision making rather than being viewed as expendable in the face of other pressures. This is an agenda that the South Downs Partnership embraces wholeheartedly.

Climate change

A.2.5 The need to work within environmental limits and to put the environment first is exemplified by climate change.

A.2.6 At the start of the 21st century, Britain is living as if there are three planets of natural resources to be exploited and three planets’ worth of capacity to absorb carbon dioxide (CO₂). Climate change is a clear and evident consequence, caused by rising levels of CO₂ in the atmosphere resulting from the use of fossil fuels. Atmospheric greenhouse gas levels are now higher than at any other time in the last 740,000 years and are around 40% higher than before the industrial revolution (3). The climate of the South East is already changing with an average temperature rise of 0.5°C over the last century (4).

A.2.7 The climate change we expect in the next 30-40 years will be due to our past greenhouse gas emissions, while climate change later this century is being determined by current and future emissions. Climate change models will be subject to regular review over the coming years. Current scenarios developed by the UK Climate Impacts Programme indicate that the South East will experience the greatest changes in climate in the UK, with average daily temperatures between 3°C and 5°C higher than current levels. The Stern Review Report on the Economics of Climate Change, released in October 2006 by HM Treasury (5), identifies that climate change could shrink the global economy by 20% but taking action now to combat climate change would cost just 1% of global gross domestic product.

A.2.8 In response to the Kyoto Protocol, the Government has set a domestic target to reduce CO₂ emissions by 20% below 1990 levels by 2010, and a long term ambition to reduce CO₂ emissions by 60% by 2050. It is the aim of the Climate Change Bill launched in March 2007 (6) to provide a long-term framework to meet these targets and ensure steps are taken to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

A.2.9 The implications of climate change are profound and present six challenges for the South Downs:

• **Research**: Developing a better understanding of the likely implications of climate change on the environment and economy of the South Downs

• **Mitigation**: Taking action NOW to minimise the effects of climate change on the special qualities of the South Downs

• **Adaptation**: Encouraging farming and land management activities to adapt to the effects of climate change in ways that minimise environmental impact

• **Carbon sequestration**: Maximising the capture of CO₂ from the atmosphere consistent with wider conservation objectives

• **Reducing CO₂ emissions**: Saving energy in the home, in businesses and by travelling less by private car

• **Renewable energy**: Developing renewable energy sources that can be generated in ways that do not adversely affect the special qualities of the South Downs.

These challenges underpin this Management Plan and will require constant review as more accurate information becomes available.
**Thinking outside the boundaries**

A.2.10 Although the Plan’s remit does not formally extend beyond the boundary of the protected landscape, many of the ambitions and policies set out in this Plan are applicable to the wider areas of Sussex and Hampshire (see paragraph A1.10). Wildlife knows no boundaries: farming within protected landscapes does not differ dramatically from farming outside; and opportunities for countryside access cross administrative and designation boundaries. Activities and developments outside of the protected landscape may impact upon the South Downs. Policies and strategies for land outside the boundary of the protected landscape therefore need to take account of their potential effect on the designated landscape. Although not yet confirmed, the National Park designation is a material consideration in planning terms and has therefore been taken into account in the preparation of this Plan.

A.2.11 This Plan has been greatly influenced by the location of the South Downs within the South East region of England - the gateway to Europe. It is the most prosperous and populated region in the UK, with over 8 million people in 2004 outside London. By 2026 the population is anticipated to have grown by a further 1 million with a projected increase in households of between 724,000 and 866,0003 (8).
A.2.12 The Regional Economic Strategy for the South East (9) proposes that “by 2012 the South East will be recognised by all as one of the world’s 15 top performing regional economies.” The region has 15% of the UK’s total employment and a Gross Value Added (GVA) per head second only to London and showing a 40% increase in the last 10 years (2). Total employment in the South East is forecast to rise by between 734,000 and 805,000, an increase of between 18% and 20%, by 2026 (2). This could lead to labour shortages encouraging further in-commuting and in-migration to the South East.

A.2.13 In comparison, the South Downs is an oasis, with an estimated resident population of 115,000 in 2001. Yet currently 1.8 million people (of whom 86% are urban dwellers)4 live within just 10 km of its boundary (10), and a total of 10 million people live within an hour’s journey time (11).

A.2.14 Responding to identified growth pressures, the South East Plan (2006) identifies the need for considerable new development. Significant growth along the coastal plain to the south, with between 6,000 and 8,000 households per annum (including anticipated growth in Southampton and Portsmouth) will directly affect the South Downs.

A.2.15 The future of the South Downs is therefore inextricably linked with the region in which it sits. Population growth and prosperity have and will place additional pressure on the South Downs, not least through development pressure, traffic growth (already the region has the most heavily used roads outside London), natural resource use and depletion (especially increased pressure on dwindling water resources), and erosion of environmental quality. Very careful planning will be required to ensure that these pressures do not adversely affect the South Downs.

A.2.16 Despite these pressures, the spectacular landscapes of the South Downs and other protected areas in the South East have so far managed to retain a timeless and elemental quality in this region of rapid change, offering inspiration, solace and opportunities for quiet reflection that are such essential components of quality of life in a modern world. As development pressures increase in surrounding areas, the environmental value of the South Downs is likely to increase even further as people seek a balm to their pressured lives.

### An evolving policy context

A.2.17 This is an era of considerable policy evolution. Over the coming years, national and local climate change policy is likely to affect most aspects of daily life, business and methods of land management. Sustainable development will continue to rise in importance. Agricultural support under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has been subject to fundamental change, with the cessation of support for agricultural production. It is likely to change further in the future. Implementation of the Water Framework Directive will require significant changes to land management. Forestry policy now clearly focuses on supporting the wide range of benefits that woodlands can provide (12) with a particular emphasis in the South East on the conservation of our ancient woodland resource (13).

A.2.18 Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, Natural England has been created as the government agency responsible for conserving and enhancing England’s natural environment and raising public understanding and enjoyment of it.

A.2.19 As part of sustainable development, Government is placing increasing focus on maintaining mixed and vibrant communities and is strongly committed to making understanding and enjoyment of the countryside accessible to all: the young and old; people with disabilities;
people from minority groups; and those from inner cities. This in turn links to agendas for health and education.

A.2.20 Methods of delivering policy are changing too. Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004, the planning system was reformed and streamlined, with an emphasis on spatial planning. It is under this Act that local planning authorities are producing their Local Development Frameworks (LDFs), which comprise a range of statutory Local Development Documents allocating land for development or containing planning policies by which planning applications are determined. Covering the South Downs are fifteen LDF/Minerals and Waste Development Frameworks (MWDFs), and the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East (the South East Plan) (8). This Management Plan does not supersede these documents but, as a statutory document in its own right, will, where appropriate, be a material consideration in the planning process and an instrument for securing better consistency across the South Downs in planning matters. (The South Downs Planning Guidelines provide greater detail on the Joint Committee’s approach to certain developments and the planning policies it seeks in Local Development Documents).

A.2.21 This Management Plan takes account of this evolving national, regional and local policy context and seeks to deliver all national, regional and local polices that support the Vision and Aims of this Management Plan.

THIS MANAGEMENT PLAN
Structure of this Management Plan
A.3.1 PART B of this Management Plan is structured under 10 Ambitions. These Ambitions support the Vision and Aims set out at the front of this Management Plan. Each Ambition has measurable targets and specific policies. The timescales of these are:

- The 10 Ambitions should be achieved over the next 20 years
- Targets should be achieved within 5 years of publishing the Plan
- Policies will be reviewed in five years but it is anticipated that many will endure
- The separate Action Plan will be reviewed annually

A.3.2 Inevitably there are a number of themes that cut across the Ambitions. In particular:

- **Climate change** is relevant to all the Ambitions to a greater or lesser extent and, where relevant, Ambitions have climate change-related policies. In particular there are policies to meet and exceed Government targets for the reduction of CO₂ emissions (see paragraphs A2.5 – A2.9).
- **Landscape** is covered under Ambition 1 yet the whole Plan, either directly or indirectly, is concerned with the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty. Biodiversity, cultural heritage, peace and quiet, and natural resources are key components of natural beauty, while the local economy and local communities are central to its maintenance.
- **Sustainable land management** (Ambition 6) lies at the very heart of this Management Plan, providing the primary means by which the conservation and enhancement of the landscape, cultural heritage, biodiversity, and natural resources will be achieved.
- **Transport**: The need to reduce reliance on the private car and its impact on the South Downs is a recurring theme relating to: the conservation of tranquillity; reduced energy consumption and more sustainable lifestyles; and the promotion of sustainable recreation and tourism.
SUMMARY OF THE AMBITIONS FOR THE SOUTH DOWNS

In summary the 10 Ambitions for the South Downs are to achieve:

1. An unspoilt landscape of the highest quality and diversity
   Ensuring that: Regional and local planning policies reflect the Management Plan and its associated documents; development within and immediately beyond the boundaries of the protected landscape is of high quality in terms of siting, design and materials, is in line with design guidelines, does not detract from but makes a positive contribution to local landscape character and reinforces local distinctiveness.

2. An historic and cultural heritage valued by local people and visitors and benefiting future generations
   Ensuring that: There is a significantly improved understanding of and partnership working for, the historic environment of the South Downs; ensuring improved management of scheduled sites; protecting and enhancing the known archaeological resource and the integrity of the built environment - settlement form and structure, listed buildings, and historic farmsteads and trackways; and traditional skills and sources of materials are developed for historic building restoration.

3. A tranquil landscape with extensive dark night skies
   Ensuring that: The conservation and enhancement of tranquillity and dark night skies within the South Downs are considered in all future development decisions affecting the South Downs; traffic levels and the visual and noise intrusion of roads within the South Downs are reduced; any increase in noise from aviation is resisted over the South Downs; and other activities which increase noise and light levels are controlled within the South Downs. All related reductions in energy use will help reduce CO₂ emissions.

4. A landscape rich in wildlife, with extensive swathes of interlinking habitat managed to maximise benefits for nature
   Ensuring that: The landscape-scale restoration and re-linking of key habitats are prioritised in areas where this will maximise benefits for biodiversity and natural beauty and increase habitat and species resilience to the effects of climate change; biological diversity is maximised across the whole of the South Downs; low input farming is promoted as is the conservation management of habitats and earth heritage resources; and there is increased understanding of the wildlife resources of the South Downs to inform future management decisions.

5. Unpolluted air, soil and water to allow the landscape and wildlife of the South Downs to be sustained, and reduced CO₂ emissions that exceed government targets
   Ensuring that: Water resources in the South Downs are conserved in the face of climate change with water-dependent habitats and river flows retained; there are significant reductions in soil erosion and diffuse water pollution despite more extreme weather events; high water quality and lack of litter characterises the coast; alleviation of increasingly severe coastal and river flooding looks to management options that work with natural systems and achieve significant environmental gains; local communities become increasingly self-sufficient in meeting their own energy needs from renewable sources; and they achieve reductions in CO₂ emissions and reduced resource use in excess of national government targets.
6. Sustainable management of the land supported by the necessary skills and expertise
Ensuring that: All aspects of sustainable land management take account of the implications of climate change and increasing weather extremes; agri-environment schemes assist in the delivery of the Ambitions for the South Downs; special land management projects sustain and enhance the landscape and encourage conservation grazing; sensitivity studies identify preferred locations for biomass crops and markets for bioenergy encourage sustainable woodland management; integrated advice promotes sustainable land management and recognises the special needs of amenity landowners; the economic and environmental benefits of mixed farming are promoted and encouraged as are traditional land management skills.

7. A buoyant local economy supported by, and directly contributing to the management of natural beauty and its enjoyment
Ensuring that: The local economy helps enhance the natural beauty of the South Downs through the development of markets (including public procurement) for sustainably produced foods and wood products; the necessary infrastructure is in place to help such businesses; the environmental sustainability of all businesses in the South Downs is raised; sustainable tourism is promoted as a major economic sector; and the South Downs brand is developed to support those businesses that are contributing to natural beauty and its enjoyment.

8. Wide ranging opportunities for countryside recreation and access respecting the natural beauty of the South Downs
Ensuring that: The distribution and management of visitors conserves and enhances natural beauty and heightens visitor experience; all sectors of society are welcomed and active exercise is encouraged for its benefits to health and well-being; alternative transport options reduce reliance on the private car; localised recreational impacts are managed; and the access network is enhanced.

9. Sustainable communities strongly linked to the locality, with the housing to support local needs and essential workers
Ensuring that: Actions respond to identified local needs; improving the availability of affordable housing and developing innovative solutions to the retention of local services; alternative transport options to the private car are developed with the support of the local community to ensure access to local services are maintained or enhanced. Residents are involved in conserving the environment and continuing to support cultural events.

10. Widespread awareness and understanding of the South Downs
Ensuring that: The profile of the South Downs is raised nationally increasing understanding and enjoyment of the South Downs; there is improved education for sustainable development; awareness is raised of the implications of individual life-style choices on the future of the South Downs and the environment more generally; and communities are re-connected with their local landscape.
Delivering the Ambitions

A.3.3 Achievement of these Ambitions is dependent on many organisations and individuals (see Appendix 2) and will involve:

**Policy delivery:** Delivering national, regional and local policies that support (and have helped shape) the Ambitions in this management plan while ensuring that new policies are developed by relevant authorities, where needed, to support the Ambitions.

**Statutory planning:** Ensuring that all the qualities which make the landscape special are appreciated within the planning system and that the effect of development on all such qualities is given proper weight in the decision-making process. In this respect, national, regional and local planning policies should:

- give comprehensive protection to all the distinctive elements that make the South Downs special, including designated sites and features
- be based on the character of the South Downs as set out in the Integrated Landscape Character Assessment of the South Downs and Urban Fringe Studies
- be consistent in the highest level of protection afforded to the South Downs
- follow the approach set out in PPS7 for the assessment of major development proposals in the South Downs
- follow sustainable development principles.

The emphasis needs to shift to development that is “good enough to approve” rather than “bad enough to refuse” (14). (This is explained in the South Downs Planning Guidelines (2007)).

**Incentives:** Ensuring that the incentives (such as agri-environment scheme payments) available within the South Downs are focused on delivering the Ambitions for the South Downs and, wherever possible, that new incentives are identified to fill any gaps.
Advice: Ensuring that all relevant advice given within the South Downs reflects the Ambitions for the South Downs, with business and other advice clearly linked to enhancing environmental quality; such as reducing CO₂ emissions and promoting sustainable practices.

Initiatives and projects: Using existing initiatives and projects (from public transport proposals to local food initiatives) to help deliver the Ambitions for the South Downs and developing new integrated initiatives and projects where this will fill gaps in delivery.

Community planning and action: Ensuring that local communities have the support to identify their own needs compatible with the Ambitions for the South Downs. Encouraging volunteering and providing support and training for volunteer groups that helps meet the Ambitions of this Plan.

Training: Ensuring that the traditional skills that once shaped the South Downs, from shepherding to hedge-laying, are available to support the continuing management of the South Downs and new skills linked to the development of new sustainable business enterprises are supported.

Awareness-raising: Ensuring that key decision-takers, visitors and residents are fully aware of the issues facing the South Downs and their role in helping to conserve and enhance the protected landscape and the wider environment.

Partnerships and strategic alliances
A.3.4 Partnerships and strategic alliances (see Appendix 2) will be central to the delivery of the Ambitions to ensure that:
- the best knowledge and experience is brought to bear
- resources for individual initiatives and actions are maximised
- the full range of delivery mechanisms are explored
- there is integration of interests and the full range of potential benefits is achieved

A.3.5 Issues such as water shortage, winter flooding events, soil erosion, and sea level rise, to name but a few, require a thorough and integrated commitment to identify the most sustainable solutions that maximise all round benefits. New forms of strategic alliance may be needed to see the big picture and act upon it. Small unco-ordinated site by site responses will not be enough in the face of climate change and the other pressures facing the South Downs.

Monitoring this Plan
A.3.6 This Plan will be monitored through the measurement of both outputs and outcomes.
- Outputs: measure the achievement of actions identified in the South Downs Action Plan. The achievement of the actions will be influenced by whether they have been incorporated into the Annual Business Plans of partner organisations.
- Outcomes: monitor the condition of the protected landscape (in terms of its environment, economy and community) through the measurement of individual indicators. In other words, they measure the effect of the actions on the quality of the protected landscape.

A.3.7 This Management Plan will be monitored at two levels:
- Through the Action Plan process and review, with actions achieved identified against specified timeframes. This will be a measure of outputs.
• Through the State of the South Downs Report, which, by collecting information over time against a series of indicators, will identify whether the Ambitions and targets in the Management Plan are being achieved – a measure of outcomes.

A.3.8 In turn, the monitoring results of the Action Plan and State of the South Downs Report will be evaluated, to assess the effectiveness of the Management Plan and how it needs to be updated to take the next step towards the Vision.

Baseline information

A.3.9 The need for monitoring emphasises the importance of developing and maintaining a strong evidence base (the South Downs Data Bank) relating to the 10 Ambitions. Much information has been collected on the South Downs but the current baseline information requires further work as:

• Relatively little information has been collected for ‘the South Downs’ as a single contiguous area and much work is needed to extrapolate data collected for different geographical areas to the boundary of the protected landscape

• Data that has been collected has often been collected in different forms, to different methodologies and to different time lines, in different parts of the South Downs, making it difficult to merge data sets to provide a consistent baseline across the South Downs as a whole.

• Different administrative areas will have had different priorities so while there may be good data in one part of the South Downs there may be none in another.

• There remain aspects of the South Downs where relatively little is known – the archaeological resource is one such area, as is knowledge about the wider biodiversity resource beyond the main habitat types.

A.3.10 This Management Plan, therefore, has been developed on the best available knowledge. In some cases targets have been identified without the full supporting data against which success can be measured. Nevertheless the targets are valid as they represent essential steps towards achieving the Ambitions and Vision. A priority will be to ensure that the necessary baseline data is in place to allow the targets to be measured.

A.3.11 Developing the baseline is an ongoing task. The specific information needs are picked up in the Action Plan and will be reviewed by the South Downs Joint Committee and its partners annually. It is particularly important that this is seen as a shared task between all partners who hold relevant information, including the constituent county and district councils (e.g. local authority Annual Monitoring Reports); English Heritage; Natural England; the Environment Agency; the South East England Development Agency; the County Wildlife Trusts; the National Trust; and the many other organisations active within the South Downs.

Policy response to the State of the South Downs Report - evidence base

P0.1 Retain and update a robust evidence base for the South Downs, through the South Downs Data Bank and the State of the South Downs Report, allowing assessment of whether the Ambitions and Targets of this Management Plan are being achieved.
UNDERSTANDING THE SOUTH DOWNS

Underlying geology

A.4.1 The key to understanding the diversity of the protected landscape is its underlying geology and subsequent cultural evolution. Geology has determined not only the physical landform, local climate and vegetation cover but also the way in which the landscape has evolved under human influence. The uplift and progressive erosion of the Wealden Dome, which covered much of south east England many millions of years ago, exposed a fascinating sequence of geological history which underlies the South Downs.

A.4.2 The oldest rocks of the protected landscape are the clays of the Wealden Vale, exposed by the progressive erosion of the Wealden Dome (15). These clays were laid down over 130 million years ago when the South East of England was a low-lying area of marshes, deltas and lakes. Today they form an undulating clay lowland drained by a branching network of minor streams.

A.4.3 During the Mid-Cretaceous period, 110 million years ago, the marshes and mudflats of the South East were inundated by a warm sea. The majority of the rocks that structure the protected landscape were formed from layers of marine sedimentation laid down over the next 40 million years.

A.4.4 The Hythe Beds of the Lower Greensand were some of the first sediments laid down on the seabed. Particularly resistant to weathering, they form the horseshoe of dramatic and rugged Greensand Hills that encircle the Wealden Vale and which have been cut by narrow streams to form deep, ravine-like valleys or ghylls, accentuating the ruggedness of the landscape. These hills reach a maximum height of 280m at Black Down - the highest point in the South Downs.
A.4.5 To the west and south of the Greensand Hills is a rapid sequence of Lower Greensand deposits, which create distinctly different landscapes in close proximity. The Sandgate Beds form a rolling relief of sandy well-drained and easily eroded soils, now largely under arable production. These give way to the west and south to the Folkestone Beds. These form a slightly elevated, flat-topped heathland plateau with poor soils and deep seams of sand that have been exploited over the centuries, with numerous sand pits and quarries. In turn, these give way to the later Gault Clay deposits formed from thick dark mud that accumulated under deep still seas. These now form a clay vale to the west and south of the heathlands.

A.4.6 At a later date, stronger sea currents were re-established and the sandier sediments of the Upper Greensand were deposited. These are relatively hard rocks, and form a bench with its own distinctive secondary scarp at the foot of the Chalk scarps of the Hampshire Downs to the west and the South Downs in West Sussex to the south. Further east along the South Downs scarp, the underwater currents were evidently less active as the Gault Clay lowlands extend to the foot of the Chalk of the South Downs.

A.4.7 The dominant geological feature of this protected landscape, however, is the Downland of the South Downs and Hampshire Downs, formed from the Chalk - the youngest rocks in the geological sequence and exposed at the eastern end in the Seven Sisters cliffs.

A.4.8 The Chalk ridge of the South Downs forms the central spine of the protected landscape – seen through human history as momentous – Hilaire Belloc’s “great hills of the South Country” and Gilbert White’s “chain of majestic mountains”. In Sussex, cut into a series of discrete blocks by the four major north-south river valleys of the Arun, Adur, Ouse and Cuckmere, this distinctive Chalk ridge has a steep north facing scarp slope and gentle southerly dip slope. This is an area of expansive, rolling upland relief with little surface drainage, carved into sweeping forms. Coombes punctuate the scarp while extensive dry valley systems carve the dip slope. Towards the southern margins of the dip slope, a line of hills and ridges forms an intermittent secondary escarpment resulting from the differing resistance of the Chalks.

A.4.9 Within Hampshire, the Chalk ridge of the South Downs breaks into a series of discrete hills that merge with the gentle undulating Chalk plateau of the Hampshire Downs to the north. The Hampshire Downs end in their own dramatic, east-facing scarp to the west of Petersfield.

Lower chalk ammonite
Cultural evolution

A.4.10 “Human influence represents a mere scratch on the surface, following the millions of years when the landscape was formed by nature alone. But the scale of human influence is out of all proportion to its relatively short history” (15). The cultural evolution of the landscapes that make up the South Downs is considered briefly below, starting with the Chalk Downlands, which were the first known areas of human habitation.

Open Downland

A.4.11 The Open Downland or Eastern Downs to the east between Eastbourne and the Arun forms a landscape largely devoid of tree cover or hedgerows, with much of the area never having been enclosed by hedgerows – laying bare the breathtaking, chalkland topography.

A.4.12 The evolution of this landscape is the product of agriculture. Neolithic woodland clearance, followed by more extensive Bronze Age clearance, resulted in major soil erosion, with soils washed off the downland into adjacent valleys. Indeed by the Roman period it is contended that woodland clearance was almost total and that arable cultivation had reached “a high water mark on the Downs that was not exceeded until after the Second World War” (16). From this time on the balance between semi-natural chalk grassland as open sheepwalks and arable cultivation swung backwards and forwards responding to market conditions. Areas of arable production centred on the richer soils of lower land reached into areas of grassland on higher ground and steeper slopes at times of greater demand.

A.4.13 Stock rearing largely dominated up to the end of the 16th century, but from the 1650s onwards the sheepwalks began to be ploughed. The late 18th century saw the introduction of the Southdown, a new breed of sheep, developed specifically for the Downs. This was
the heyday of ‘New Farming’ - a sheep/corn husbandry system supported by a mixed farm economy, with sheep folded on arable fields at night and fodder crops grown as an additional food source for the sheep. Writing in 1813, the Reverend Arthur Young commented:

“Between Eastbourne and Steyning, which is thirty three miles, the Downs are about six miles wide, and in this tract there are some 200,000 ewes kept: the whole tract of the Downs in their full extent, is stocked with sheep, and the amazing number they keep, is one of the most singular circumstances in the husbandry of England.” Referring to the folding of sheep on arable lands at night, he described the Sussex sheep flocks as “that great moving dung hill.”

A.4.14 By the First World War, the number of sheep on the Eastern Downs was a third of their level in the 1880s (17). Agricultural depression between 1875 and the start of the Second World War also led to the abandonment of arable land (except for increased arable production during the First World War). As a consequence, much arable land was replaced by scrubby pasture, including that on the deeper soils of the Chalk dip slope.

A.4.15 Nevertheless, the latter half of the 20th century saw a rapid increase in the area under arable production. National and EU subsidies, and the agricultural intensification that followed, had two profound effects: they made arable production profitable even on more marginal land; and they spelt the end of the traditional mixed farming systems. Now the emphasis is on arable monocultures dependent on the use of inorganic fertilisers.

Wooded Estate Downland

A.4.16 The Wooded Estate Downland or Central Downs, forming the undulating downland plateau between the Arun and the A3 near Petersfield, had an early evolution similar to that of the Eastern Downs. Nevertheless, reflecting that much of the Chalk here is covered in a thick layer of clay with flints, woodland clearance was much less dramatic, with ancient woodland abounding to this day. While sheep and corn always featured in the economy, the area evolved as a landscape of sport and leisure. As early as the Saxon period, extensive parts of the higher Downs were set aside for hunting, being suitable for little else, with deer parks and hunting forests. By the 17th century the area was famed for its hunting grounds. But today’s landscape is largely a product of the Georgian period, by which time the great families were well established - the Norfolks, Richmonds, and Leconfields, with their large estates including those of Arundel Castle, Goodwood, Petworth, West Dean, Stansted and Uppark. Extensive planting was a key feature of these Georgian estates, with interlinking beech woodlands framing views, supplemented by considerable additional planting during the 1920s and 1930s. As noted by H.G.Wells recalling his upbringing at Uppark “in no other country in the world has such a continuous effort been made to elevate leisure, or the appearance of it, to a finely judged art” (18).

Downland Mosaic

A.4.17 By contrast, the Downland Mosaic or Western Downs, reflects a range of different soils and land uses, with varying tree cover and field patterns which, in combination, create a mosaic of different landscapes. These areas cover the chalkland landscapes within Hampshire – both the western extension of the South Downs to Winchester and the Hampshire Downs which lie immediately to the north.
A.4.18 As in the areas of Open Downland, a sheep-corn husbandry system developed during the Medieval period, with huge communal sheep flocks on the Downs. But this system was far less efficient than that practised on the Open Downland in the east. The pasture was less extensive while substantial woodland cover remained on areas of heavy, poor soils. As a consequence, sheep were often required to graze common wood pasture, together with cattle and pigs, producing a pastoral system more reminiscent of the Weald.

A.4.19 During the Medieval and post-Medieval period, the open fields around many of the settlements and farmsteads were enclosed with hedgerows, producing an irregular field pattern. Subsequently, the remainder of the downland was enclosed during the 18th and 19th centuries, producing regular field systems that now characterise much of this part of the Downs. As on the Wooded Estate Downland, areas of heavier soil were often used for hunting, with a number of deer parks recorded. Remaining areas of ancient woodland have been supplemented by clumps of post-1800 plantings, many of which originated as game coverts (19).

**Chalk Valley Systems**

A.4.20 These branching valley systems drain the dipslope of the western chalk downs and contain a river along at least part of their length. In the past it is likely that the rivers were much wider in extent compared to the present course. The valleys have provided important routeways from prehistory – today they often contain a road or winding lane connecting a string of regularly spaced nucleated flint villages. Historically, meadowland alongside the rivers was an integral part of the agrarian landscape based around sheep-corn husbandry, providing valuable winter and spring grazing for the extensive sheep flocks. The rivers in the past were used to power watermills, which, together with weirs, mill ponds, fish farms, trout lakes and watercress beds, are distinct features of the landscape.

**Major River Floodplains**

A.4.21 The major river floodplains form the valley floors of the large U-shaped valleys that cut through the eastern part of the South Downs. They extend from Arun in the west, including the lower Rother tributary, to the Cuckmere in the east. The rivers are generally tidal in their lower reaches and meander across their floodplains between artificial floodbanks. Some stretches have been artificially straightened leaving isolated meanders. The rivers would have been important routeways from prehistory onwards, and remained navigable until well after the medieval period. Some settlements on the valley sides remained in use as small river ports into the 20th century. The floodplains are criss-crossed by regular man-made drainage ditches. Remnant areas of wetland, reedbeds, fen, floodplain grassland and marsh are of high biodiversity interest and support large numbers of birds. Roads or railway embankments often mark the boundary of the flat floodplain and the valley sides.

**Wealden Greensand**

A.4.22 Essentially this is a medieval landscape, but embraces huge variation that reflects the influence of the underlying banding of Greensand sandstones and clays.

A.4.23 Through history, the two most intensively farmed areas on the Greensand have been the light sandy soils of the Lower Rother Valley (on the Sandgate Beds) and the Upper Greensand terrace at the foot of the Chalk in West Sussex and Hampshire. By the Medieval period the Rother Valley probably supported a mixed agrarian landscape with villages surrounded by open fields, and with woodland and heath pasture further from the
settlements. While much of the open field systems were enclosed on a piecemeal basis followed by other enclosures during the 18th and 19th centuries, these characteristics have been largely swept aside as a result of late 20th century agricultural improvement.

A.4.24 Conversely, the landscape of the Greensand terrace has largely retained the bones of its earlier evolution. Dominated by Medieval spring-line villages, open field systems were enclosed between the 15th and 17th centuries, indicating the relative prosperity of the area at the junction between the Chalk uplands and lower lying areas. In contrast, the intimate wooded landscape of the Gault clay vale is more typical of the medieval landscape that characterises the Low Weald, with isolated farmsteads set within irregular fields or ‘assarts’.

A.4.25 Of very different character are the extensive areas of spectacular heathland associated with the poor acidic soils of both the Folkestone Beds and the Greensand Hills. Here the original hazel ‘wildwood’ was cleared for farming during the prehistoric period, but the soils quickly became impoverished, leading to the creation of heathland. Much of this heathland is common land, utilised for centuries for grazing, wood pasture, and as a source of fuel. During the 20th century, significant areas of common land were converted to conifer plantations although small, scattered fields (medieval assarts) remain where former common land was enclosed in previous centuries.

A.4.26 The heathlands of Woolmer Forest and Weavers Down had a different evolution. Like the New Forest, this was a royal hunting forest with common land limited to its periphery. Extensively planted with conifers in the 19th century, it was handed over to the military services in the late 19th century for training purposes, with public access largely excluded.

A.4.27 The Greensand Hills with the Low Weald formed part of the industrial heartland of the Wealden iron industry, with William Camden commenting in the 16th century that “a great deal of meadow ground is turned into ponds for the driving of mills by the flashes, which, beating with hammers upon the iron, fills the neighbourhood about it, night and day, with continuing noise.”

The Low Weald

A.4.28 Finally, the Low Weald stands out as a quintessential medieval landscape over Wealden Clay. Once covered in dense woodland that colonised following the last Ice Age, this area remained largely untouched until the Saxon period, when communities living on better soils began to exploit the Wealden interior, initially as swine pastures within the woodland, and then with piecemeal clearance starting in the 12th and 13th centuries. To this day the area reflects its wooded medieval origins with irregular fields (‘assarts’ or forest clearings) surrounded by wooded shaws (remnant woodland) and with numerous, interlinking ancient woodlands remaining as a lasting reminder of the wildwood from which farmland was won. Medieval deer parks, too, provided food, recreation, and status for the landed elite. Former medieval deer parks are recognisable as compact islands of recently enclosed, regular fields surrounded by irregular early enclosures, with the parkland boundary ‘pale’ still visible as curvilinear field boundaries.

A.4.29 Superimposed on this medieval landscape are the effects of the Wealden iron industry, which came to prominence in the 15th century with the exploitation of the local iron ores and sands for iron working and glassmaking. Whilst difficult to believe today, this was the first recorded industrial centre in the country, although the industry remained essentially rural.

A.4.30 The present-day landscape character of these areas is summarised under AMBITION 1.
SPECIAL QUALITIES OF THE SOUTH DOWNS

A.5.1 Reflecting the diverse evolution and character of the landscape, the special qualities of this nationally protected area can be summarised as:

- A range of unique, distinctive but interlinked landscapes, from the open flowing downland of the eastern South Downs, to the magnificent, wooded estates of the central South Downs, and the landscape mosaic of western Downs. Here also are the diverse largely medieval landscapes of the Greensand and the intimate wooded landscapes of the Low Weald. This is a landscape of different ‘places’ each with their own distinct identity but interlinked visually and culturally.

- A dramatic and distinctive topography that reflects the diversity of underlying geology, including the dramatic north-facing Chalk scarp of the South Downs, which forms the horizon for those living in the central Weald; the double scarp of the Chalk and Greensand stepping eastward off the Hampshire Downs; the whale–back ridges, coombes and dry valleys of the South Downs; the steeply incised river valleys that cut north-south through the Chalk; and the rugged Greensand Hills, which include the highest point in the protected landscape.

- Strong skylines on the Chalk Downs and Greensand Hills with a sense of elevation, expansive views and big open skies.

- A contrast between expansive open downland and intimate wooded landscapes, with the open, smooth, curving downland of the eastern South Downs contrasting with the densely wooded character of the central South Downs, Greensand,
and Weald, which together have nearly 30% woodland cover, including extensive tracts of ancient woodland.

- **Dramatic chalk cliffs** between Seaford and Beachy Head defined as Heritage Coast and affording panoramic sea views.

- **A collection of habitats of international importance**, including remaining ancient chalk grassland - the defining habitat of the South Downs; remnant flood-plain pastures of the river valleys of which the best known is Amberley Wildbrooks; the chalk rivers of the Meon and Itchen; the lowland heathlands of the Greensand; the magnificent ‘hanging’ woodlands of the Chalk scarp and Upper Greensand; and the coastal habitats found between Seaford and Eastbourne.

- **A landscape imbued with history**, with the very surface etched with the effects of human habitation over millennia, including internationally important archaeological sites; funerary monuments; ancient field systems and settlements; differing forms of field enclosure reflecting different periods in history; ancient sunken lanes and trackways; water meadows; watercress beds and dewponds; and more recent reminders of the last two World Wars, with the South Downs having a deep-rooted association with the Allied invasion forces of the Second World War.

- **A serene and peaceful landscape** providing the opportunity to enjoy peace and quiet and the natural sounds of the countryside, with 26% of the protected area classified as either very tranquil or remote in the Tranquil Areas studies undertaken in 1997 for the two AONBs.

- **An unspoilt landscape**, which across much of its area retains a timeless quality, largely lacking the intrusion of larger-scale modern or inappropriate development.

- **Villages of the highest architectural quality** that provide an important complement to the landscapes within which they sit, displaying a range of vernacular styles, from the flints of the Chalk and surrounding area to the brick and sandstones with clay hung tiles of the Greensand and Weald.

- **Traditional market towns** that remain the main centres of population within the South Downs with their own distinct identity. This includes Petworth, Petersfield and Midhurst within the current AONB boundaries and Lewes and Arundel within the proposed National Park.

- **A concentration of estates and designed parklands of the highest quality in the central South Downs and on the Greensand**, including Goodwood, Cowdray, Uppark, Stanmer Park and Petworth Park, which bring a distinct character to the landscape with their ancient trees, sweeping deer lawns and distinctive tree clumps and estate plantings.

- **A range of iconic places that are part of the national consciousness** from Alfriston and Beachy Head in East Sussex to the Jack and Jill Windmills at Clayton in West Sussex and to Selborne, the home of the naturalist Gilbert White, in Hampshire.

- **The resources of air, soil and water** which provide the basic building blocks of the natural world. Of particular value within the South Downs are the ground waters of the Chalk and Greensand aquifers, which feed the chalk streams and rivers of the Downs and are a vital source of drinking water for the urban areas of the South Coast plain.

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5 Figures relate to the area of the two AONBs
• **A very accessible countryside**, with no less than 3,200 km of public rights of way including the South Downs Way National Trail and 15 regional walking routes, linking to a complex of country lanes and new access land provided under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

• **An area offering immense attractions for recreation** with over 39 million leisure trips made to and within the South Downs (2003) (21). This figure is greater than the number of visits to any of the current National Parks in England, and is testimony to the area’s enduring attraction and easy accessibility to the highly mobile population of the South East.

A.5.2 The conservation of any one characteristic in isolation will not conserve the unique character of the South Downs. It is how these special qualities interact in different ways and in different localities that has created the unique mix of landscapes and places so valued by people, accompanied by an absence of pollution, abundant wildlife and the sounds and smells of nature.

A.5.3 Much of the essence of the South Downs has been captured through art and literature (inspiring writers as diverse as Alfred Lord Tennyson, Kipling, Trollope, Galsworthy, Belloc, Gilbert White and Virginia Woolf). In the absence of environmental monitoring in previous centuries, these writings provide a descriptive yardstick against which the present-day landscape can be measured.

**KEY THREATS TO THE SOUTH DOWNS**

A.6.1 Whilst the South Downs retains its unique character and special qualities, the area has changed and is changing. Much that creates that character has been eroded in both quality and quantity.

A.6.2 The key threats to this protected landscape are driven by the profound implications of climate change by the development pressure and economic growth within the region, demands for recreation and by the nature of modern agriculture and the broader rural economy.

**Climate change**

*Climate change* poses immense challenges for the future of the protected landscape (see paragraphs A2.5 – A2.9). These challenges include:

- higher water demand as a consequence of hotter drier summers, leading to reduced ground water and river flows, reduced biodiversity and increased concentration of pollutants

- increased frequency and severity of flooding

- the potential for increased soil erosion as a result of sudden downpours

- inundation of coastal areas

- a potential change in the species composition of habitats making small fragmented sites particularly vulnerable to loss of biodiversity

- pressures for renewable energy developments and a rapidly growing demand for bioenergy crops

- a potential change in cropping patterns and types of crops (and therefore landscape) in response to a changing climate.