

South Downs National Park Authority

# State of the South Downs National Park 2012



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The South Downs National Park uniquely combines biodiverse landscapes with bustling towns and villages, covers an area of over 1,600km<sup>2</sup> (618 miles<sup>2</sup>), is home to more than 110,000 people and is Britain's newest national park. The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) is the organisation responsible for promoting the purposes of the National Park and the interests of the people who live and work within it. Our purposes are:

1. To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area.
2. To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.

Our duty is to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of the local communities within the National Park in pursuit of our purposes.

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The South Downs National Park Authority has made every effort to ensure that the information contained in this report is correct at the time of going to press. We are creating a microsite on our website with additional information which will be updated on a regular basis.

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This icon indicates where you can find additional information on our website or from external sources.



The National Park Authority would like the online version to be a reference point for both members of the public and specialists with a keen interest in the detail behind this report. In a number of places, you will see this help icon. This highlights areas where insufficient information currently exists on important topics and where we are inviting proposals from partners for new data gathering projects.

## Foreword

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Welcome to the first State of the National Park Report for the South Downs National Park.

Last year we drew together the qualities that make this National Park such a very special place and this report is structured around these special qualities, setting out the facts and figures that tell us what condition they are in. You will also find in Chapter 9 our Vision for what we hope they will be like by 2050.

We are indebted to the partners and stakeholders who helped us develop this report. It is to you we will look in the future to help us care for this precious place and to turn the Vision into a reality. This report will be the baseline from which success is measured and for that reason it belongs not just to the National Park Authority, but to everyone who cares about the future of the South Downs National Park.

With the Vision now in place we have begun the task of developing a strategic Management Plan to take us there and I hope you will join us in achieving this. I hope too that in the future we will all be able to look back at this report and feel proud of the work we have accomplished together.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margaret Paren". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Margaret Paren**

Chair

# Map of the South Downs National Park



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## Chapter 1

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# INTRODUCTION

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### **Timeless quality, constant change**

The South Downs National Park is a special place, with visitors from near and far amazed to find so much beauty and diversity just a stone's throw from London. It represents outstanding examples of lowland landscapes<sup>1</sup> in the UK. From the dramatic chalk cliffs at Beachy Head, the chalk escarpment runs 114km westward, culminating in the wide open sweep of the arable Hampshire Downs. To the north of the West Sussex Downs, before the edge of the chalk turns northwards at Petersfield, lies the intimate patchwork of woodland and heathland of the Western Weald rising to the isolated splendour of Blackdown.

This is not an untouched wilderness, however, but a living, working place that has evolved over several thousand years of complex interplay between people and place, an interplay which continues to this day.

The very accessibility of this part of England, and the ease with which the chalk hills, in particular, could originally be cleared and settled, means that almost every stage of the human story of Britain, its history and culture, is woven into the very fabric of the land.

As people have shaped these landscapes, so too have the landscapes shaped the communities. The geology, topography<sup>2</sup> and natural resources of the National Park have influenced the patterns of agriculture, settlement, industry and culture, and the places we now see as special are the product of this interaction.

In Britain, it is easy to take for granted the continued existence of the sort of living, working 'cultural landscapes' which exist in the National Park, yet they are important on a global scale. Our familiar landscapes hide within them

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1 In physical geography, a lowland is any broad expanse of land with a general low level

2 The surface shape and features of an area

environmental and cultural treasures no less important than those of the world's great wilderness national parks or the rich urban environments of international cities, and they exist in marked contrast to the large-scale intensive agricultural monocultures<sup>3</sup> which now dominate many lowland zones. This distinctiveness is recognised by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).<sup>4</sup>

It is for all these reasons that the Order for Designation for the area of the South Downs and Western Weald to become Britain's newest National Park was made in 2002. With an area of 1,653km<sup>2</sup> (618 miles<sup>2</sup>), it includes heritage coast, farmland and woodland, National Nature Reserves, historic monuments, visitor attractions, listed buildings and Conservation Areas. There are thousands of archaeological features, as well as parks and gardens, historic houses, market towns and villages. It is also a landscape that has attracted and inspired artists, writers and musicians from Eric Ravilious to Jane Austen, Rudyard Kipling, Elgar, John Ireland and Gilbert White, to name but a few. This rich cultural heritage lives on in the many works of art and artefacts held in country houses and museums throughout the area, and still grows as creative individuals continue to be inspired by the National Park's special qualities.

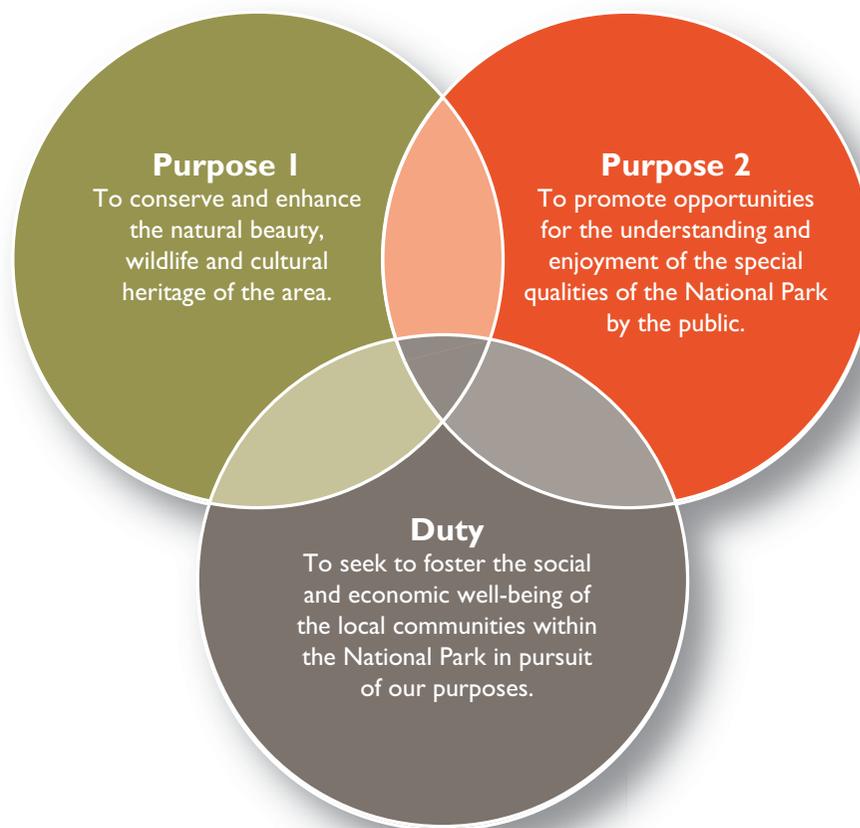
Over 110,000 people live in the market towns, villages and countryside of the National Park, and 1.97 million more live right on its doorstep. This sets the South Downs National Park apart from many of Britain's 13 other national parks the majority of which, though they all include living, working and populated landscapes, have far fewer people in and immediately around them. Its future, like its past, is interdependent with the areas that adjoin it – both its landscape and its residents' best interests are served by close working partnerships across its borders. The creation of the National Park provides an opportunity to ensure that its future stewardship brings benefits to people

<sup>3</sup> The cultivation of a single crop on a farm or in a region or country

<sup>4</sup> A protected area where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced a distinct character with significant ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value; and where safeguarding the integrity of this interaction is vital to protecting and sustaining the area and its associated nature conservation and other values; (1994) Management Guidelines for IUCN Category V Protected Landscapes/Seascapes

within and around it, as well as those much further afield who love and cherish it. With those benefits come responsibilities. This interdependence is recognised in the Purposes for which national parks are established, and the Duty which is placed on the National Park Authority itself:

Figure 1.1 Purposes and duty of the National Park



The designation of the National Park is not about creating an island within which some mythical rural idyll can be recreated. Change has been a constant factor in shaping its special qualities: flint gave way to bronze, then iron; the economics of agriculture saw the balance between sheep and corn on the South Downs fluctuate many times; populations have ebbed and flowed; the creation of the large estates led to new, designed, landscapes. It will continue to be subject to substantial external influences over the next few years including:

- the profound and long-term effects of climate change and our responses to it;
- changes in the rural and agricultural economy; and
- migration and an ageing population.

It is the job of the National Park Management Plan, built on the foundations of this report, to find an appropriate response to these and other influences, to build a shared vision of the future and to inspire and engage the people, communities and organisations who live in, work in or visit the area. Our challenge will be to ensure that however different the future looks the special qualities of the National Park endure.

## A snapshot based on existing data

This is the first *State of the South Downs National Park* report, and the National Park Authority has worked closely with many organisations and individuals to create it. Produced just 18 months after we became operational, this publication draws largely on existing data from local authorities, statutory agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). All of these bodies have information on the area of the National Park, but the degree to which this can be mapped to the National Park boundary varies widely. The National Census data, for example, is quite old as up-to-date information, cut to the boundary, will not be available until after publication. The report must be read with these caveats in mind.

Despite all the limitations imposed by existing data, a picture does begin to emerge, in words and images, of the National Park as it is today, a baseline against which future changes can be measured. We have striven to ensure that

the style and tone of the report, and the choice of data referred to within it, is as value-neutral as possible: the place for making judgements about how to tackle the complex issues that emerge from it is the upcoming Management Plan.

For ease of use, each of the main chapters of the report highlights key facts and key data. The latter are datasets which we and our partners have made a commitment to monitor and update on a regular basis. For example, in Chapter 7: Well-conserved historic features and a rich cultural heritage, we will work with English Heritage to monitor the number of 'heritage at risk' sites in the National Park.

We are also creating an online version of this report to which we will regularly add new and updated data when it becomes available.

Where you see a  in this report you can go to the online version to find additional information and links to the key information sources or evidence used (where available). We would like the online version to be a reference point for both members of the public and specialists with a keen interest in the detail behind this report. In a number of places, you will see a help icon.  This highlights areas where insufficient information currently exists on important topics and where we are inviting proposals for data gathering.  This indicates where you can find additional information on our website or from external sources.

## Use of statistics

The use of averages in many of the datasets in this report does create particular challenges in a National Park as large and varied as this one. The presence of towns like Petersfield and Lewes, and the variations which occur in so many attributes (such as rainfall and house prices) from east to west, mean that all the mean averages, though in themselves are accurate, need to be treated with caution.

Figure 1.2 The seven special qualities of the South Downs National Park



## Special qualities

A crucial starting point for managing change in the future is to capture the essence of what makes the National Park important now – its special qualities. Every national park has developed a list of the things that make it special, both as a baseline for measuring changes over time and to hold the National Park Authority and its partners to account for their contributions to its future.

In the case of the South Downs, we were particularly keen to ensure that the special qualities reflected the views of the people living in and around the National Park. To this end we asked residents and visitors, landowners and farmers, businesses, school pupils, parish councils and many others to put forward their ideas. The seven special qualities arose directly from this work, and the chapters that follow are structured around these special qualities.

The special qualities do not sit in isolation. Rather, they are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Landscape is the key to all of the other special qualities and is therefore shown at the centre of Figure 1.2.

The published special qualities can be found on our website:



[www.southdowns.gov.uk/about-us/special-qualities](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/about-us/special-qualities)

## Creating the whole picture

Although the seven special qualities capture much of the essence of the National Park and what creates its 'sense of place', they cannot paint the whole picture. They are perhaps better thought of as a way of measuring our 'stocks', the assets which we have inherited and wish to pass on to future generations. The aim behind the National Park designation must be to conserve and enhance all seven together.

At the heart of this challenge lies the quality of the relationship between people and landscapes and places. Being a new national park gives us the opportunity to understand more about how to measure and value this relationship, and this in turn will help us to find ways of building a virtuous circle between the two – to promote activities and enterprises which benefit people and landscapes

and places at the same time. This means we can start to measure how things interact as well as what they are.

In Figure 1.3 the grey arrow pointing to the right is about increasing the ways in which people can benefit the landscapes and places of the National Park – not just enjoying and understanding, but making a contribution through more sustainable farming, as responsible visitors, as greener businesses, social enterprises, volunteers and as active communities.

**Figure 1.3** The relationship between people and landscapes and places



The orange arrow pointing to the left in Figure 1.3 is about ensuring that the way we manage our landscapes and places provides the maximum, sustainable, benefits to the people who live in, work in or visit them. This is nothing new: our forebears in the Middle Ages were part of an economy that managed the landscape to produce a range of local resources such as timber, grazing, water and minerals: a mixed economy in which the presence of a springline or the availability of fuel and building materials was as important as crop production.

This simple and enduring principle known as ecosystem or 'natural' services would have been widely understood in previous centuries. Although the balance changed over time, the rural economy remained quite diverse in its use and management of natural resources until very recently. But rapid changes in technology and the availability of abundant, cheap, fossil fuel energy have made it profitable for the first time to grow crops intensively. This, for example, contributes to diffuse pollution of drinking water supplies which then have to be cleaned up at a cost to the public.

It is worth noting that as early as the nineteenth century enlightened and forward looking corporations in Brighton, Worthing and Eastbourne started to purchase large areas of downland in order to secure the water supply on which their own residents relied.

## Ecosystem services and benefits

Ecosystem services or 'benefits from nature' can be defined simply as the services provided by the natural environment that benefit people. There are four broad categories of services:<sup>5</sup>



**Regulating services:** such as water purification, air quality, flood protection and climate regulation



**Supporting services:** functions that underpin all of the above, such as soil formation and nutrient cycling



**Cultural services:** 'non-material' benefits such as physical well-being, education and inspiration



**Provisioning services:** products such as food, water and raw materials

5 Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005) *Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Synthesis*, Island Press

The science, economics and national policy work around ecosystem services will provide a very important set of tools to help promote a more diverse, resilient and sustainable local economy.

### **Reviewing and updating the report**

This first *State of the South Downs National Park* report establishes a baseline and explains the 'key data' we intend to measure. Each of the key data may be measured at different times, some each year and some less frequently. In some cases you will see from the report that we are responsible for collecting the data, in others it will be one of our partner organisations such as Natural England, or a Government Department such as the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). Some new work – for example, about the character of the landscapes – has already been completed and is included in this report. Work to fill other evidence gaps, such as the visitor and residents survey, has been commissioned but is not yet completed. As we complete new evidence work, we will make it available on our website.

The key data in this report is shown at the end of the relevant chapters (2–8) and will also be made available on our website.

We intend to review the major changes in the *State of the South Downs National Park* report at the same time as we carry out the first review of the National Park Management Plan, which is likely to be in 2017.

### **Acknowledgements**

We have used our own expert knowledge about landscapes, biodiversity, farming and the wider rural economy, recreation and learning, cultural heritage and communities to develop this report. At the same time, we have worked closely with, and benefitted enormously from, the expertise of many individuals and organisations.



## Chapter 2

# DIVERSE, INSPIRATIONAL LANDSCAPES AND BREATHTAKING VIEWS

The geology of the South Downs underpins so much of what makes up the special qualities of the area: its diverse landscapes, land use, buildings and culture. The rock types of the National Park are predominately chalk and the alternating greensands and clays that form the Western Weald. Over time a diversity of landscapes has been created in a relatively small area which is a key feature of the National Park. These vary from the wooded and heathland ridges on the greensand in the Western Weald to wide open downland on the chalk that spans the length of the National Park, both intersected by river valleys. Within these diverse landscapes are hidden villages, thriving market towns, farms both large and small, and historic estates, connected by a network of paths and lanes, many of which are ancient.

There are stunning, panoramic views to the sea and across the weald as you travel the hundred mile length of the South Downs Way from Winchester to Eastbourne, culminating in the impressive chalk cliffs at Seven Sisters. From near and far, the South Downs is an area of inspirational beauty that can lift the soul.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> South Downs National Park Authority (2011) *Special Qualities of the South Downs National Park*, South Downs National Park Authority

## The landscape of the South Downs National Park

Landscape is more than scenery or a backdrop to our lives – it links culture with nature, and the past with the present. The landscapes of the National Park have been formed by the interaction of both natural factors such as geology, landform, soils and biodiversity; and cultural factors such as farming, land use, settlement patterns and other human activities. This interplay of natural and cultural influences has resulted in the National Park's distinctive and diverse landscapes.

The resulting landscape 'character', and the ability to read the record of past activity in the landscape of the present,<sup>7</sup> greatly influences the value we place on landscapes. Landscape is also important in terms of the benefits and services it provides us with, such as food, wildlife and clean water. It also helps to shape both our sense of place and of community.

To the east the open downland culminates in the spectacular chalk cliffs at Seven Sisters and Beachy Head, giving stunning panoramic views to the sea and northwards across the weald. The chalk ridge, which is further sculpted by steep coombes and dry valleys and is cut through north to south by four major river valleys, extends westwards with steep north facing escarpments<sup>8</sup> and gentler south facing dip slopes<sup>9</sup>. This more westerly downland is more expansive, wooded and enclosed but no less impressive. It merges into the Hampshire Downs with their own dramatic east-facing escarpment to the west of Petersfield.

Figure 2.1 How landscape 'character' is formed

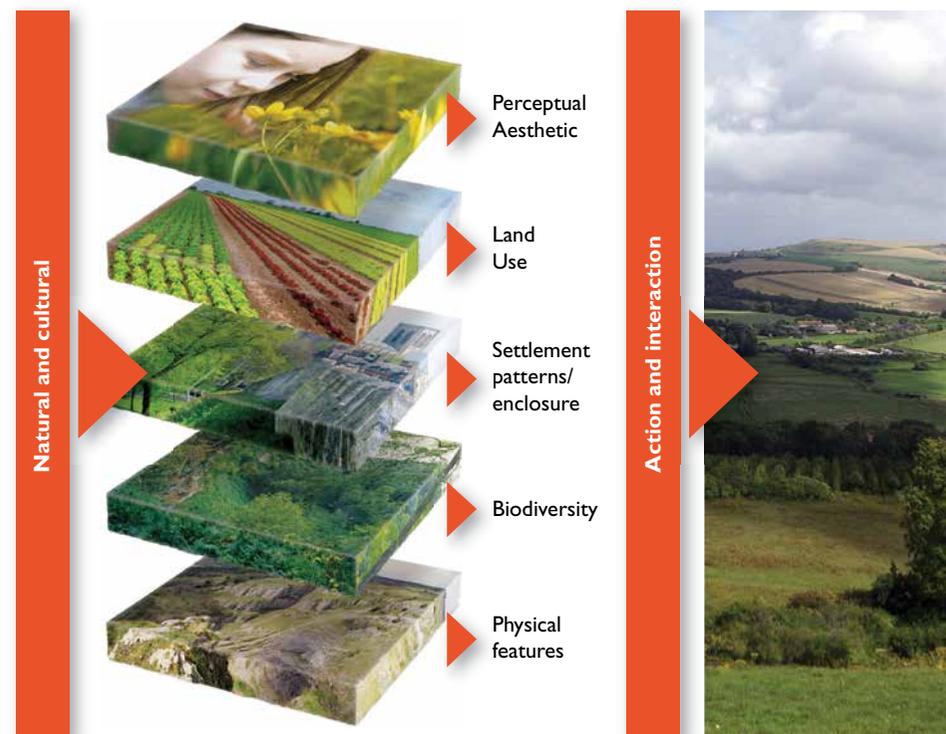


Photo © Amanda Davey

7 Time-depth: The visible evidence in the landscape for change and continuity over periods of time

8 The surface of the steep slope is called a scarp face or escarpment

9 Scarp and dip slopes are geological features found on large ridges such as the South Downs where one side is steep and irregular (scarp slope) and the other side (dip slope) is generally flatter and tilts at a continuous angle

A series of equally impressive, greensand ridges lie to the north of the South Downs escarpment, and to the east of the Hampshire Downs escarpment (See Map 2.2). This area and its hinterland contain the intimate network of lanes, hedges and wooded heaths of the Western Weald.



Heathland at Iping Common © SDNPA



Devil's Dyke © Richard Reed

A Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) is a way of classifying, mapping and describing the characteristics of a landscape. It provides a framework within which important elements of the landscape can be maintained, change can be managed and positive environmental benefits secured.

The National Park has a rich and complex landscape character, with significant local variation and contrast. The *South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment* (2005) provides the most current assessment within the area, highlighting this diversity by recognising 18 landscape types and a further 49 place-specific 'character areas' (see Map 2.1).

The assessment was updated in 2011, primarily to include the additional areas brought within the final boundary of the National Park. These include significant areas of land around Alice Holt, Tide Mills and Rowlands Castle.



**For more information on landscape types and character areas that are found within the National Park.**

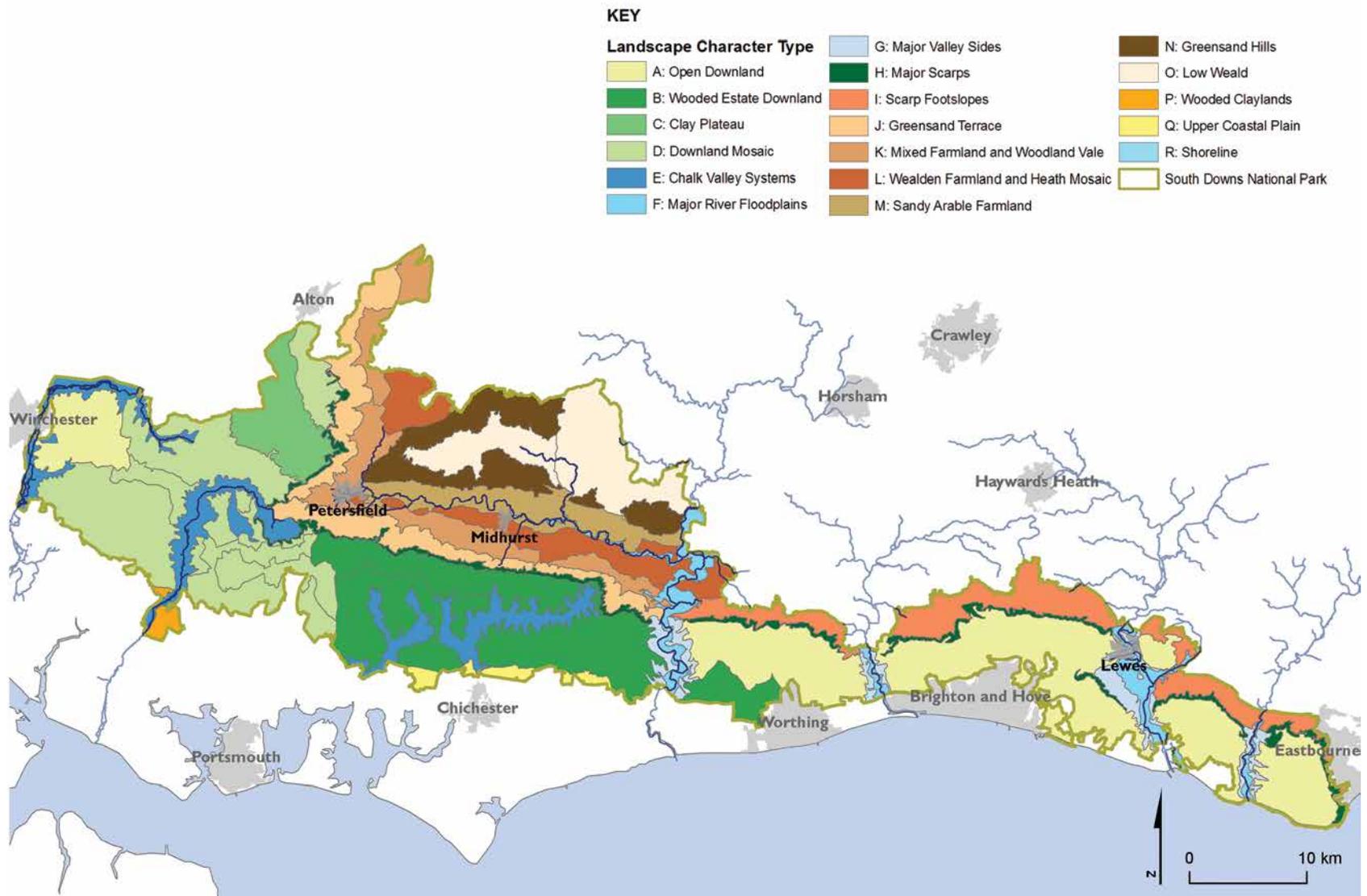
## Map 2.1

The landscape character 'types' that make up the South Downs National Park

Maps prepared by:  
GeoSpec, University of  
Brighton; February 2012.

Source: South Downs  
National Park Landscape  
Character Assessment,  
South Downs National  
Park Authority, 2011

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## Geology and landform

The chalk of the South Downs was formed by marine deposits laid down when this part of Britain was covered by warm, tropical seas between 65 and 100 million years ago, during the Cretaceous period. The layers of chalk also contain bands of flint nodules, a common feature of the walls and buildings within the downland villages.



For how flint is formed.



Chalk cliffs and beach © Countryside Agency

The chalk sits on top of earlier marine deposits of greensands and gault clay, and terrestrial deposits of the wealden sandstones and clays, all laid down during the 45 million years before the chalk. These layers (or 'strata') were pushed up and folded into a huge dome by the same powerful geological processes that formed the Alps.

## Case Study Professor Rory Mortimore



Professor Rory Mortimore is a geologist and expert on the chalk of the South Downs who lives in Lewes and works in the South Downs National Park. He has dedicated 40 years of his life to the study of South Downs chalk, including its geology.

"My particular interest is unlocking the evidence for and the causes of the exceptionally high former sea-levels (200–300 metres above present day) that led to the chalk-forming seas which covered the British Isles, and the causes and timings of the great earth movements that uplifted the weald and the downs into their present configuration.

I'm also working with water companies and the Environment Agency to investigate how the chalk aquifer's geology controls the mechanisms that store and release groundwater. This will help us to understand how to better manage water resources in the South Downs.

Every day, as I walk my dogs on the South Downs, new ideas about the origins of this mutton-covered landscape constantly come to my mind. There is nothing more rewarding than taking parties of enthusiasts to the cliffs and quarries of the South Downs, exploring the geology and discussing these ideas."

Over millions of years this dome was eroded by weathering, especially during the ice ages. The South and North Downs are all that remains of this dome of chalk.

Erosion and weathering of the chalk during the ice ages produced a wide variety of contrasting landforms including the characteristic 'rolling' downland, the steep escarpments, deep coombes and dry valley systems.

The present day coastline was created about 10,000 years ago when melting ice caused sea levels to rise. The sea then eroded the base of the soft chalk

cliffs, forming an overhang, which eventually collapsed. This caused the coast to retreat, resulting in the iconic chalk cliffs that we see today.

In the east the ridge itself is broken into distinct chalk blocks by the river valleys of the Arun, Adur, Ouse and Cuckmere. Further west, in the Hampshire Downs, the chalk ridge merges into a gentler, undulating, chalk plateau.

Although the chalk ridge visually dominates, other landforms also contribute to the National Park's distinctive character. The greensands in the Western Weald were also created from sea-deposited sands and clays that once were covered entirely by the chalk. Over geological time these were weathered away to leave layers of lower and upper greensand and clays, and they share a similar scarp and dip slope topography to the chalk. The chalk and the lower greensand are separated by a 'terrace' of upper greensand and a band of low-lying gault clay.

In the coastal plain to the south of the chalk ridge the chalk is covered by younger rocks formed during the Tertiary period. Only a small part of this coastal plain is within the National Park.

 **For further information on the differing geology of the National Park.**

### Designated geological sites

There are ten geological Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) within the National Park:

- Brighton to Newhaven Cliffs;
- Seaford to Beachy Head;
- Beeding to Newtimber Hill;
- Butser Hill;
- Eartham Pit;
- Horton Clay Pit;
- Southerham Worles Pit;
- Southerham Grey Pit;

- Southerham Work Pit; and
- Asham Quarry.

Details of individual Sites of Special Scientific Interest can be found at:

 [www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk/Special/sssi/search.cfm](http://www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk/Special/sssi/search.cfm)

There are a further 50 sites within the National Park that are important in terms of their geology. These are usually notified as Local Geological Sites (LGS).

 **For a map of LGS.**

### Soils

The soils derived from the chalk are mostly thin, well drained and poor in both minerals and nutrients. They only support slow rates of plant growth, which is why specialist chalk grassland species are a feature in surviving fragments of unimproved land. Areas of deeper soils, with better fertility, are found on the dip slope and in valley bottoms. In a few places, such as at Lullington Heath, wind-blown soils called 'loess' have been deposited on top of the chalk. This is thought to have been laid down during the last ice age. It often supports rare habitat types such as chalk 'heath', which are nationally important.

The sandy soils of the wealden greensand are acidic and also nutrient-poor. These are most often associated with the wooded heaths and commons such as those at Stedham, Graffham and Duncton. Between the chalk and the greensand lies a band of highly fertile soil over gault clay.

### Water and hydrology

The Water Fact File which follows Chapter 3 sets out the important facts about water and the National Park, including the chalk aquifer that stores water under the South Downs.

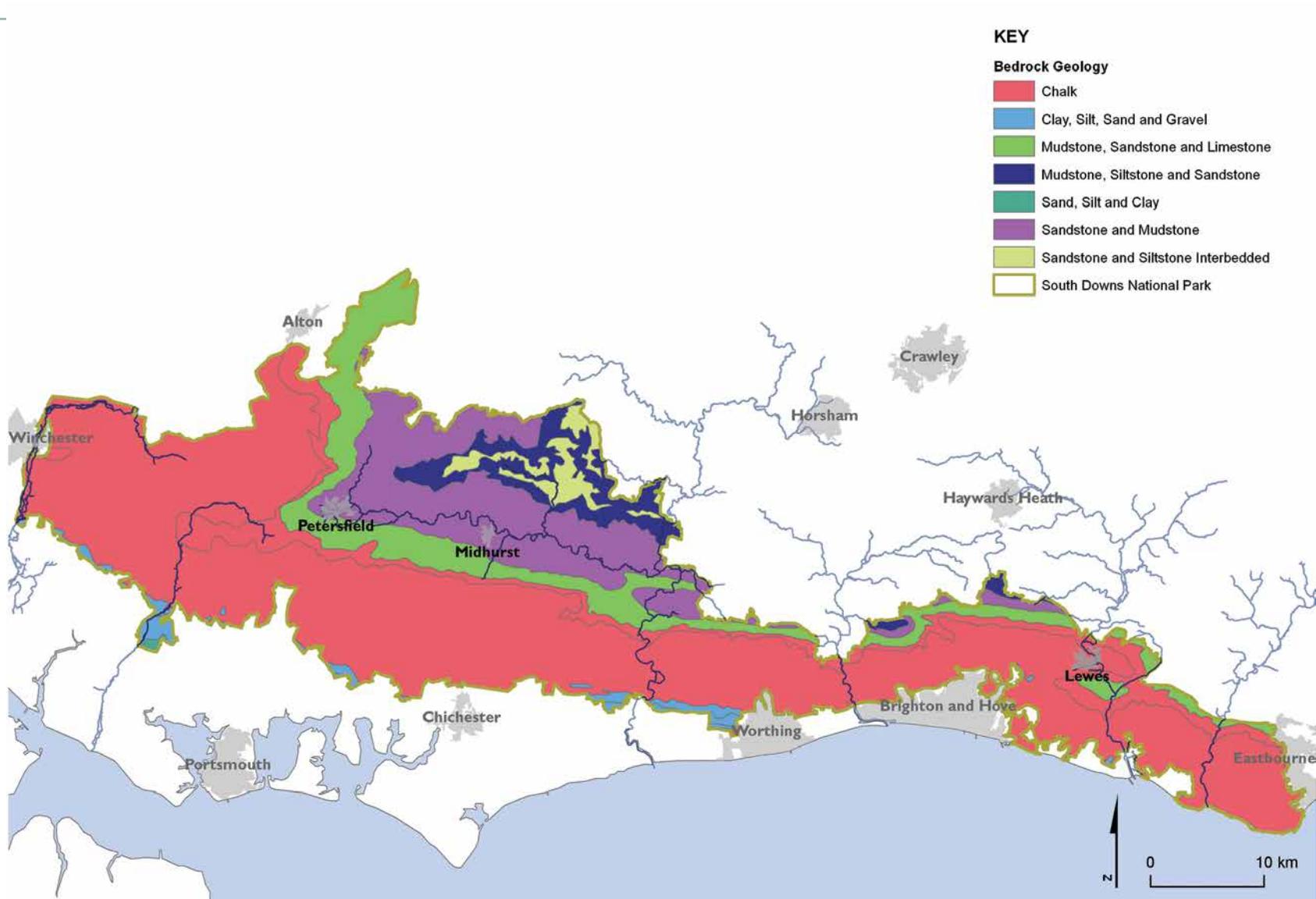
## Map 2.2

The solid (bedrock) geology of the South Downs National Park

Maps prepared by:  
GeoSpec, University of  
Brighton; February 2012.

Source: British Geological  
Survey, 2008

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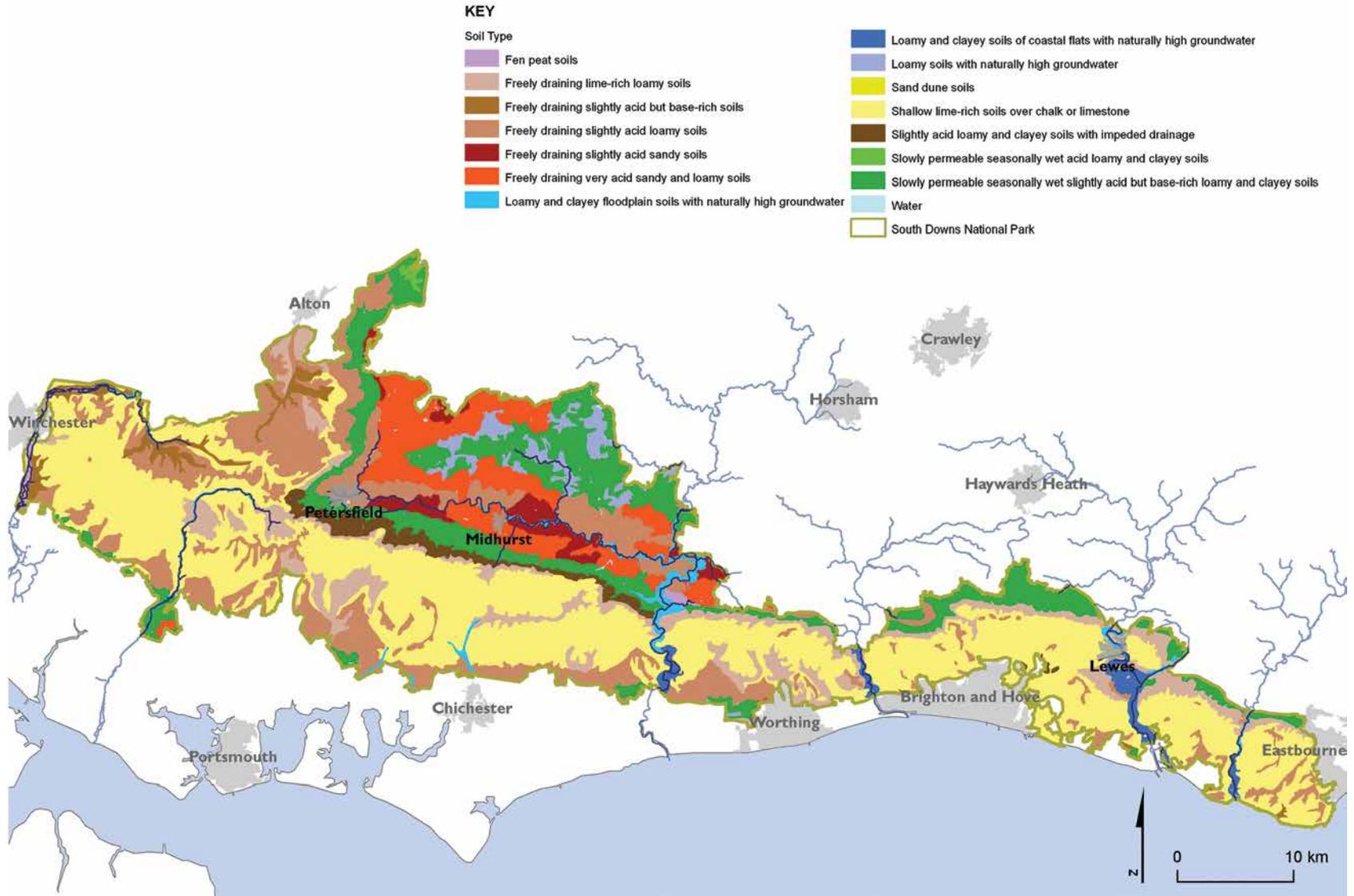
### Map 2.3

Main soil types found within the South Downs National Park

Maps prepared by:  
GeoSpec, University of  
Brighton; February 2012.

Source: National Soil  
Resources Institute,  
Cranfield University, 2001

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## Marine and coastal processes

There is 20.5km of dramatic and continuously changing coastline in the National Park. The effects of wave erosion and the instability of the chalk cliffs are starkly evident along the dramatic sea cliffs of Beachy Head and the Seven Sisters.

There were significant major cliff falls as recently as April 2001. Current rates of erosion on this section of coastline range between 10cm and 50cm per year.

These natural processes of erosion can be modified with the construction of seawalls and coastal defences, which often affect or disrupt erosion rates and the deposit of sediments further along the coast. Some coastal beaches are starved of sediment and various engineering techniques have been used to address this problem. In some cases these engineering works can also affect the scenic quality and unspoilt nature of the landscape.

Estuaries, such as the Cuckmere, are a crucial component of drainage within coastal areas, taking surface water downstream and into the sea. Where drainage of either the estuary itself or its tributaries is blocked this can create localised flooding. Estuaries are hugely important in recycling nutrients and supporting the food chain within the marine environment.

## Trees and woodland in the landscape

Woodland forms a very significant feature of the landscapes of the National Park, particularly in the central and western downs and on the wealden greensand.

In this chapter woodland is treated as a component of landscape. More detail on woodland ecology, cover, distribution and composition can be found in later chapters.



*Ashford Hangers © Charles Cuthbert*

See Map 2.4 for the spatial distribution of woodland types within the National Park.

 **For more information on the extent of woodland within the National Park.**

The National Park also has a significant number of ancient and veteran trees, such as the Queen Elizabeth oak on the Cowdray Estate. These are often iconic landscape trees, with significant historic, cultural and biodiversity value.

Other trees of significant landscape value include the surviving populations of English elms, rare populations of black poplar in the Ouse Valley and around Lewes, and the mature sweet chestnut that feature within estate landscapes such as at Stansted. They require special consideration and management in terms of their succession.

## The cultural landscapes of the South Downs

The landscapes of the National Park have changed through time, telling a vivid story of how, for thousands of years, the natural environment and human settlement have influenced each other.



*Long Man of Wilmington © NE/Peter Greenhalf*

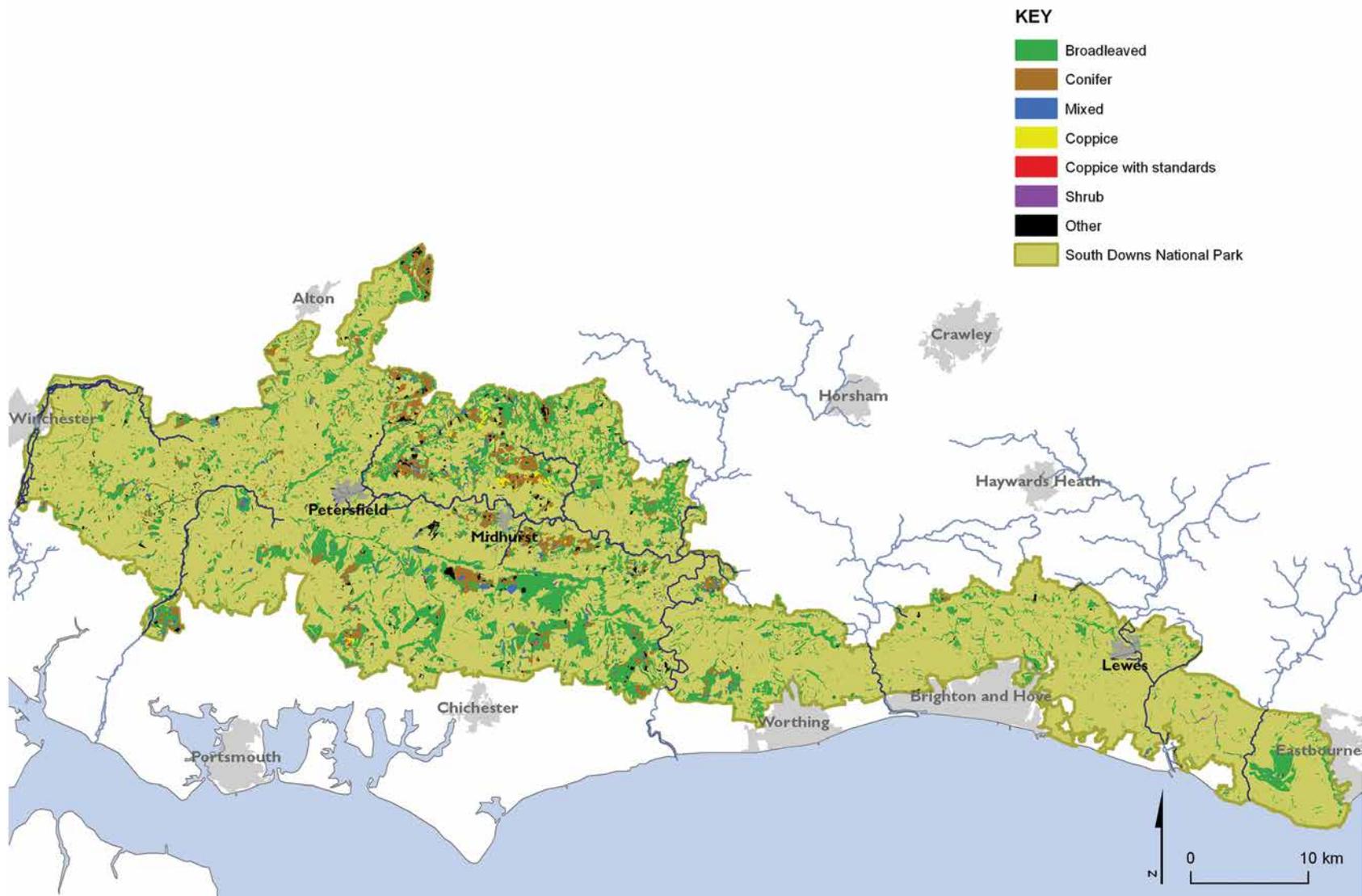
## Map 2.4

Main woodland types  
within the National  
Park area

Maps prepared by:  
GeoSpec, University of  
Brighton; June 2012.

Source: National Forest  
Inventory, Forestry  
Commission, 2011

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## Historic landscape change

### Case Study Dr Nicola Banister

Dr Nicola Banister is an independent Landscape Archaeologist with over 20 years of experience of surveying and recording woodland archaeology and historic landscapes in the south and south east of England. As well as undertaking a number of detailed historic landscape surveys on the South Downs she has also completed the Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation Map – which benchmarks the current state of the county's landscape and acts as a tool for guiding future management that recognises the history and processes which have shaped it.

“You can see the history of the South Downs written on the landscape today in places such as the top of the chalk escarpments where Neolithic and Bronze Age woodland was cleared for livestock grazing and early agriculture. Evidence of human intervention over thousands of years survives in strip lynchets, field systems, round barrows, territorial boundaries such as cross dykes and hillforts across the National Park.

This human interaction with the landscape continues today with many historic features such as ancient routeways, field boundaries, and settlement sites still in use. Understanding the processes which developed this historic character will be important for informing future decisions about how to manage the landscape to retain this historic character.”

The characteristic open and treeless aspect of the eastern half of the South Downs is the result of Neolithic and Bronze Age woodland clearance for livestock grazing and early agriculture. During the Bronze Age there was a return to more nomadic farming. By the Iron Age, hillforts such as at Cissbury were centres of economic activity. During the periods of the Roman occupation there is evidence that the area was farmed very intensively. There are remains of large Roman farmsteads and estates across the National Park, such as the nationally important site at Bignor.

Up until the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the agricultural economy generally moved between extensive livestock grazing and arable crops, in response to market conditions – such as when wool was a high value product in the 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Arable production has historically been on the better soils on the valley bottoms and dip slopes, with a move to higher ground when demand or price was greater.

In the central downlands, there was less woodland clearance, and a greater area of ancient woodland remains. Big estates continued to be a feature during the Saxon and Medieval period, with the Church being the principal landowner. With the dissolution of the monasteries in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century the land was sold by Henry VIII and moved into secular hands. This led to the development of the large country houses and estates that remain a notable feature of the central downlands. The prominent parkland landscapes, influenced by the English Landscape Movement, are largely a development of the Georgian period.

To the west, large woodland areas remain, with hedgerow and field patterns that survive from Medieval times. These are surviving remnants of the 'assart'<sup>10</sup> landscapes, which demonstrate a historic link between the weald and the downlands. Field patterns and enclosure across the wider South Downs are generally more typical of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The Western Weald has also been settled since prehistoric times, with Neolithic remains being found around Woolmer Forest. Traditionally a wooded and grazed landscape, it has significant surviving areas of common land and wooded heath. Poor soils saved these areas from early woodland clearances and fragmented areas of ancient woodland also survive here.

<sup>10</sup> Assarts were generally small, irregular fields cut out from woodland or heathland areas, some of these early enclosure patterns have survived from Medieval times



*Fernhurst Sluice, near Fernhurst © Helen Pearce*

The early iron industry, using local timber and ironstone, was also a significant feature of the Western Weald, with the remains of old quarries and hammer ponds still to be seen. More recently, the area of heathland has declined due to lack of management, conversion to arable land and development.

The rivers of the National Park have played an important role:

- as transport conduits allowing trade to and from the South Downs; and
- to generate energy, with water and 'tide' mills being used to mill grain, for example, at Bishopstone in East Sussex which operated until 1883.

Over time, siltation of the rivers affected their natural course, with historic inland ports such as Steyning and Arundel becoming land locked.

Modern development is particularly concentrated at the eastern end of the National Park with coastal towns such as Brighton and Worthing expanding along the coast and up onto the South Downs. Much of this growth occurred during the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Post war development, mainly after World War I, expanded out from the settlements along the coast. This was often unplanned and uncontrolled, and spread along the whole coastal plain adjoining the National Park. A few stretches of coastal chalk cliffs remained undeveloped such as the section between Seaford Head and Beachy Head. Timely intervention and lobbying during the 1920s and 1930s began the journey to conserve the beauty of this iconic coastline.

A way to understand the historic character of the landscape, and how past activities have shaped it, is through the Historic Landscape Character Assessments. These have been published for East Sussex, West Sussex and Hampshire, and provide greater detail of historic settlement and field patterns and evidence of other land use change over time. The integrated Landscape Character Assessment also includes a classification of historic landscape types (see Map 2.5).



[www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/integrated-landscape-character-assessment](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/integrated-landscape-character-assessment)

### **Landscape change: Recent trends and changes**

Significant areas of the unimproved downland were ploughed as part of the drive for self-sufficiency during World War II. The subsequent 50 years have seen further changes. Agricultural intensification has continued, with increases in arable and improved grassland crops. There has been a decline in species-rich chalk grassland, which is now mainly confined to the steep escarpments and valley slopes:

- Drainage and agricultural improvement of river valley floodplains, with the lowering of water tables, has altered their traditional landscape character. There has been a loss of wet pastures and historic boundary features such

as hedgerows. This has led to a more formal pattern of arable fields along the river valleys, such as in the Arun, Ouse and Cuckmere.

- The decline of traditional practices, such as extensive sheep grazing, has led to scrub encroachment on the fragments of chalk grassland that remain. However, an increase in new grassland area, and uptake of agri-environment schemes, suggests that some elements of landscape character have been enhanced. There has been some increase in hedgerow planting, and restoration of historic farm buildings and features due to these schemes.
- Agricultural practices and trends also influence landscape character such as extensive planting of crops like oilseed or flax, resulting in distinctive swathes of yellow or blue. The increased planting of vines, or growing of crops under fleece to extend the growing season, also changes visual character.
- Woodland in the National Park, despite pretty constant levels, has been affected by a lack of traditional management, with many of the surviving hazel and chestnut coppices falling into dereliction and consequently the quality of the woodland for biodiversity is declining.
- There has also been a loss and decline in the landscape quality of beech hangers and woodlands in the western chalk escarpment due to lack of management and storm damage. However, this has had benefits in terms of biodiversity, opening up glades for other plant species to move in under previously dense canopy.
- New woodland planting has assisted with natural regeneration and in linking fragmented semi-natural ancient woodland sites. However, new woodland planting has also occurred in some inappropriate locations such as the open downs to the east.
- Between 2005–2011, the area covered by Woodland Grant Management schemes increased to 14,720ha which represents 38 per cent of the total woodland cover. This suggests that a greater area of woodland is being positively managed.<sup>11</sup>

### Box 2.1 Pressures on the landscape

To date, most of the key aspects of the landscape character have been maintained. However, gradual and incremental changes can add up and, over time, lead to significant loss of local distinctiveness and ‘sense of place’.

- The open downland has been vulnerable to urban edge pressures extending from the heavily built-up areas and coastal fringe adjoining the National Park.
- Communication masts and pylons on exposed skylines are prominent within the landscape, and are often significant detractors.
- Disused chalk quarries are also prominent features, and have often been utilised as major landfill sites. All these have an impact on landscape character and quality.
- Pressures for road improvements, often with major cuttings and/or tunnels, have been an issue in the eastern downs and the Hampshire Downs to the west. This has led to reduced perceptions of tranquillity in open downland landscapes, especially adjacent to urban conurbations.
- There has been some deterioration of historic farm buildings as they have fallen out of use, but there is also a continuing trend in conversion to residential use.
- In the settlements and villages, new development has not always reflected local character in terms of traditional design and materials. This has led to increased urbanisation and some loss of local distinctiveness.
- Loss of historic features and local vernacular can also have an effect, such as the loss of traditional wooden signage, and replacement with standardised metal signage.
- Infrastructure development (for utilities etc), often does not require planning permission and can have significant impacts on landscape character. However, there have been some improvements, such as efforts to lessen the impact of power lines, like the successful undergrounding scheme at Birling Gap.

11 Natural England (unpublished) *Draft National Character Area Profiles*, Natural England

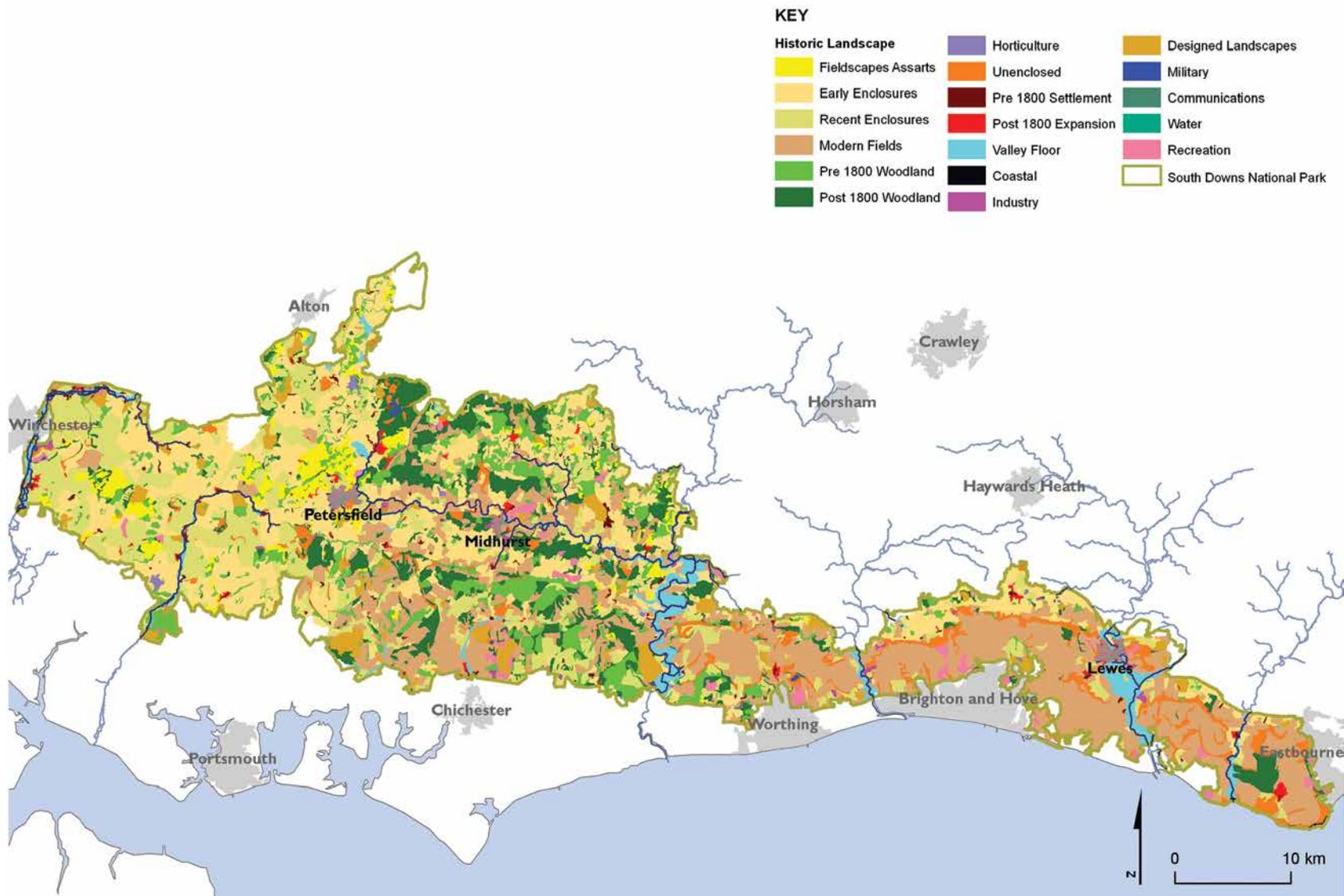
## Map 2.5

The historic landscape character 'types' within the South Downs National Park

Maps prepared by:  
GeoSpec, University of  
Brighton; February 2012.

Source: South Downs  
National Park Landscape  
Character Assessment,  
South Downs National  
Park Authority, 2011.

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## Key data: Diverse, inspirational landscapes and breathtaking views



### Landscape character

The National Park Authority, with its partners, will assess the landscape character of the National Park, and monitor broad changes in landscape character:

- **Key data:** Integrated Landscape Character Assessment (LCA); Landcover Mapping Data and Aerial Photography.
- **Current position:** Recently updated to cover the National Park area, landscape classification still fit for purpose, further updating should be carried out within the life of the Management Plan.
- **Key data:** Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC).
- **Current position:** Recently updated, further updating required to monitor changes in the historic landscape character of the National Park.
- **Data sources:** Land Use Consultants (2011) *South Downs National Park Integrated Landscape Character Assessment*, Land Use Consultants; Archaeology South-East (2011) *Revised Landscape Character Assessment – Additional Historic Landscape Characterisation*, Archaeology South-East; Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (2011) *Land Cover Map 2007*, Centre for Ecology & Hydrology
- **Responsibility for data collection:** South Downs National Park Authority, county and district councils and English Heritage.

### Geological SSSIs and Local Geological Sites (LGS)

The National Park Authority, with its partners, will monitor the condition of designated geological sites within the National Park to ensure they are being appropriately managed, and the features for which they were designated are being maintained:

- **Key data:** Monitoring data for Geological SSSIs and LGS.
- **Current Position:** Geological sites within East and West Sussex have recently been surveyed (2010/11), and their condition is being maintained. There is less data for Hampshire, with only one local site having been designated. This may be

a case of under-reporting due to not having an active local geodiversity group in that area – we are working with partners to help set up such a group.

- **Data source:** Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre and Hampshire Biodiversity Records Centre
- **Responsibility for data collection:** County environmental records centres and local geological groups.

### Woodland as a landscape feature

The National Park Authority, with its partners, will monitor the condition of ancient and semi-natural woodland features within the National Park:

- **Key data:** National Inventory for woodland and trees; uptake of woodland grant schemes for improved management.
- **Current Position:** Between 2005–2011, the area covered by Woodland Grant Management schemes increased to 14,720ha, 38 per cent of the total woodland cover. This increased uptake of these schemes suggests that a greater area of woodland is being positively managed. However, much of the woodland within the National Park is not being actively managed.
- **Data source:** Forestry Commission (2011) *National Forest Inventory*, Forestry Commission; Natural England (2012) *Protected Landscapes Data*, Natural England
- **Responsibility for data collection:** Forestry Commission and Natural England.



## Chapter 3

# TRANQUIL AND UNSPOILT PLACES

The South Downs National Park is in South East England, one of the most crowded parts of the United Kingdom. Although its most popular locations are heavily visited, many people greatly value the sense of tranquillity and unspoilt places which give them a feeling of peace and space. In some areas the landscape seems to possess a timeless quality, largely lacking intrusive development and retaining areas of dark night skies. This is a place where people seek to escape from the hustle and bustle in this busy part of England, to relax, unwind and re-charge their batteries.<sup>12</sup>

### Tranquillity

Tranquillity is an aspect of how people experience landscapes, and is an important special quality of the National Park. It is about being among the sights and sounds of nature and has an important role to play in quality of life and people's health and well-being.

### Box 3.1 Factors contributing to and detracting from tranquillity

#### Positive factors

- The openness of the landscape
- Its perceived naturalness
- Lack of noise and disturbance
- The presence of features such as rivers or views of the sea

#### Detracting factors

- Visibility of urban development and roads
- Noise and light pollution
- Other overt signs of human impact

<sup>12</sup> South Downs National Park Authority (2011) *Special Qualities of the South Downs National Park*, South Downs National Park Authority

A general measure of tranquillity, and how to assess it, was developed jointly by the Campaign to Protect Rural England and the Countryside Agency in 2005.<sup>13</sup> Based on this approach we can start to develop an understanding of how important the National Park is in the context of a busy and pressured region. We can also start to understand where the areas of greatest tranquillity are being maintained.

In the national range of tranquillity, with a potential 'top score' of 150, the National Park sits at around 50.9. Comparisons are difficult, as it is a relative measure. In the context of the most developed part of the south east, those areas of greatest tranquillity are especially important to protect (see Map 3.1).

On the chalk ridge of the eastern and central downs, the highest scores for tranquillity are found on the escarpment, dip slope and within the valleys. This is most notable away from the major settlements and transport networks. Remaining areas of tranquillity are under threat, particularly where the conurbations of the south coast impact upon the adjacent downland. The lowest tranquillity scores are associated with the areas that are close to the conurbations of Brighton, Hove and Worthing.

The Department of Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs (Defra) is in the process of producing 'noise maps' to determine the impact of environmental noise, and the effects on the public. At present only the area of the National Park around Brighton has been mapped as part of this project. The mapping does cover some of the major roads that cross or adjoin the National Park including the A23, A24, A27 and the A3 corridors.

See Defra 'Noise Mapping' at:



<http://services.defra.gov.uk/wps/portal/noise>

13 Campaign to Protect Rural England (2005) *Mapping Tranquillity: Defining and Assessing a Valuable Resource*, Campaign to Protect Rural England

## Case Study John Mason



Dr John Mason MBE is a founder member of the British Astronomical Association's Campaign for Dark Skies and has been campaigning for better quality night-time lighting for over 20 years.

"I grew up in an area that is now at the southern edge of the South Downs National Park. In those days it was extremely dark there, with the Milky Way a stunning sight, particularly on summer evenings. It is surely one of the main reasons why I became fascinated by astronomy at an early age. To me, it is just as important to be able to enjoy a clear, dark, star-studded sky as it is to be able to go on a nice walk in the countryside on a Sunday afternoon.

For the benefit of everyone who is fascinated by the great beauty and wonder of the night sky, it is vital that we conserve the dark skies of those places we still have within the boundaries of the National Park. This is not just about stargazing, it is also about preserving the night-time environment for the benefit of all the animals, birds and insects that thrive at night.

We must ensure that those areas within the National Park which have the darkest skies are protected, and that we have the necessary lighting controls in place to make sure that man-made light doesn't spoil that view in the future. This will require carefully drafted planning guidelines and enforcement of the controls on night-time lighting that are specified.

We should look on those dark places within the National Park as an invaluable resource for everyone who lives and visits here. The South Downs is an area of outstanding natural beauty, and in my opinion, dark skies must be viewed as another of its most important attractions."

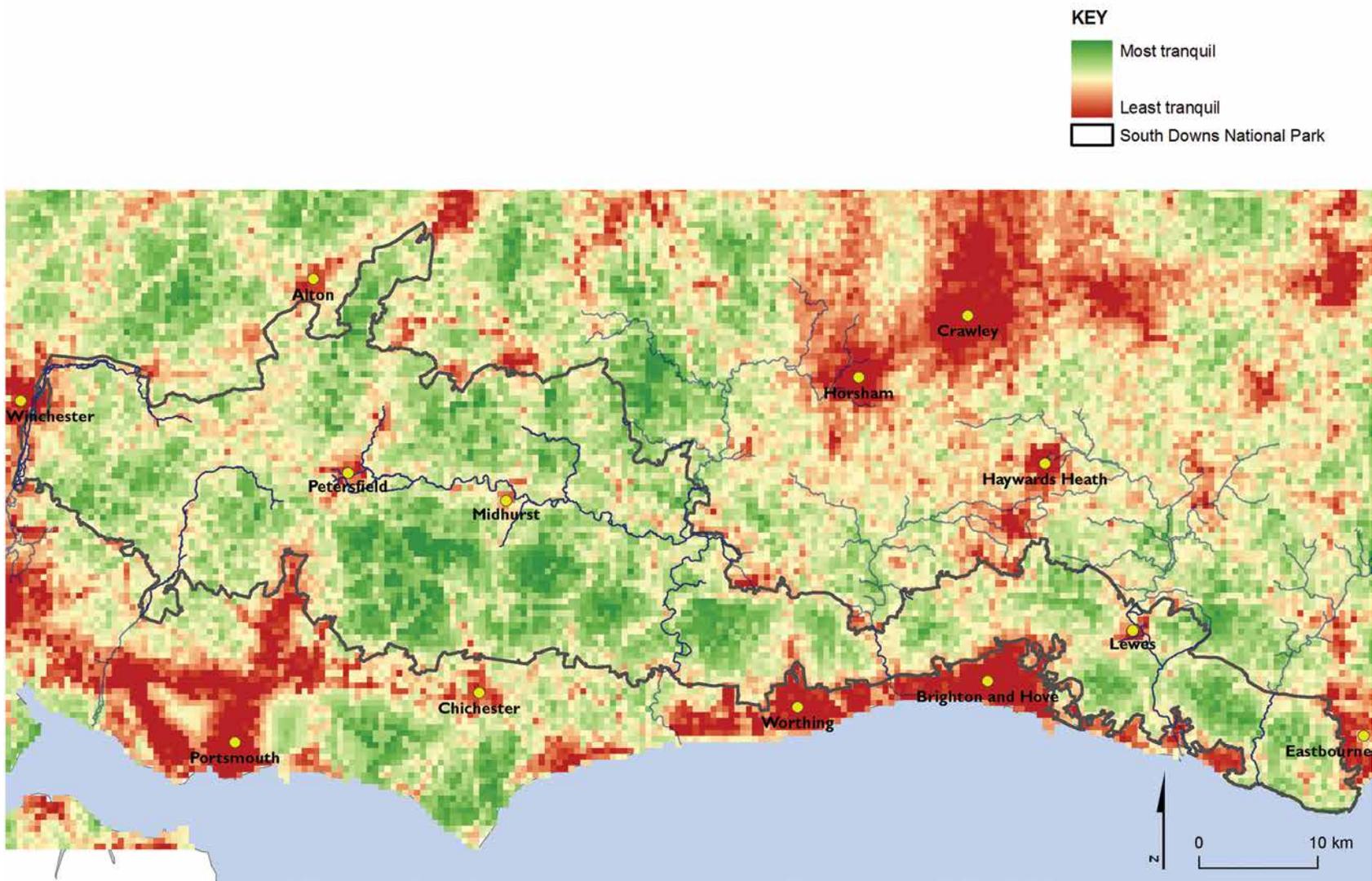
### Map 3.1

The areas of relative tranquillity within the South Downs National Park

Maps prepared by:  
GeoSpec, University of  
Brighton; February 2012.

Source: Campaign to  
Protect Rural England,  
2006

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The tranquillity and 'intrusion' data compiled by the CPRE remains the principal source to provide a baseline of the current situation within the National Park. It may be necessary to monitor changes in tranquillity within the National Park at a more local level in the future.

## **Dark night skies**

The south east is the most light-polluted region of the UK, with street and outdoor lighting affecting the dark night skies and the yellow glow from our towns and cities being visible for miles around. Map 3.2 shows light pollution for the National Park. Only 1 per cent of the region can be defined as 'truly dark' and many areas are totally light saturated. This represents a significant waste of energy. More efficient street lighting in towns and cities can greatly address this issue.

There are a few pockets of dark night skies within the National Park and these are of great value. In areas where dark night skies remain, the National Park is a place to experience the best free light show there is, with bright stars scattered across the heavens.

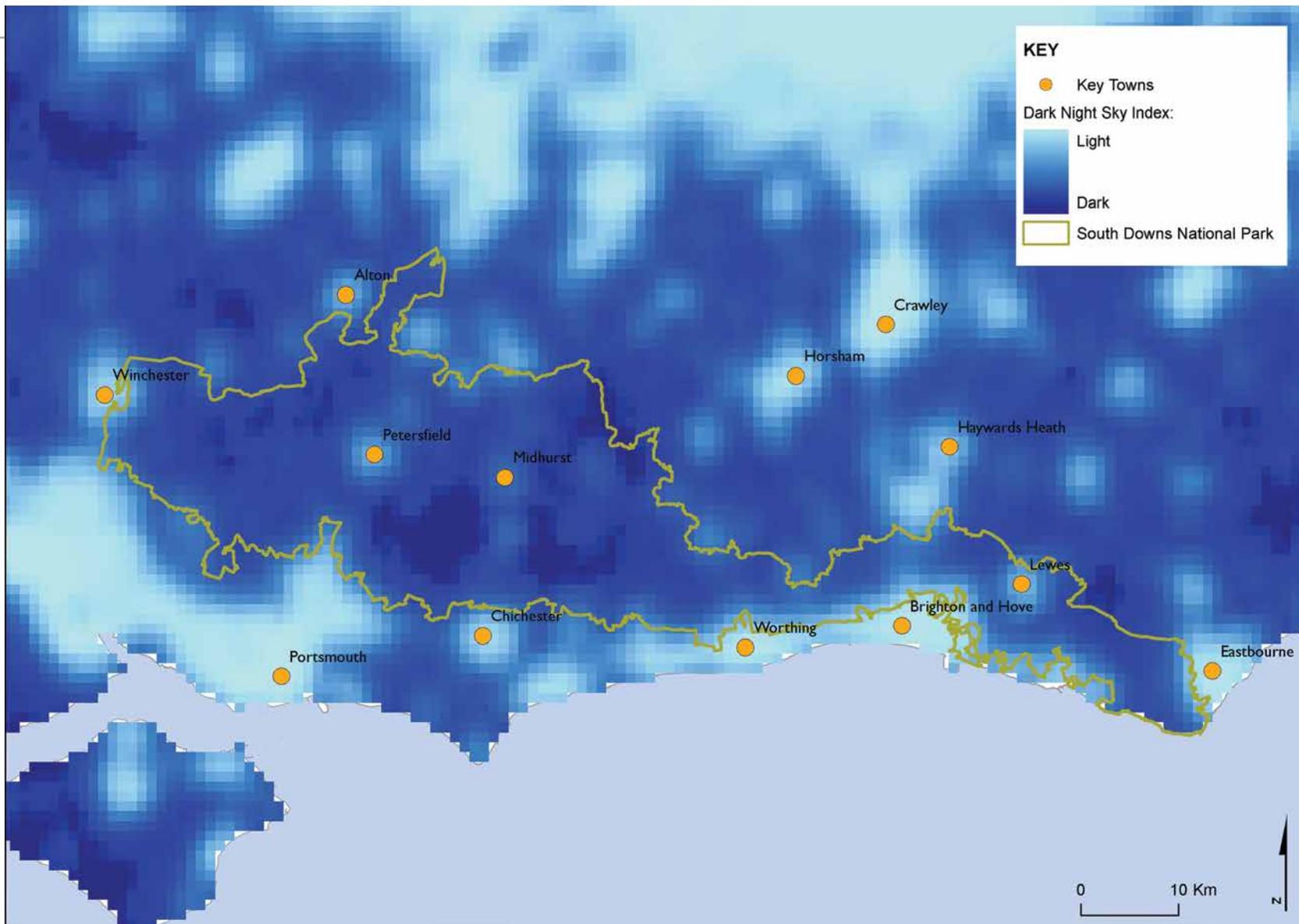
### Map 3.2

Light pollution in the south east

Maps prepared by:  
GeoSpec, University of  
Brighton; February 2012.

Source: Campaign to  
Protect Rural England,  
2003

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# Key data: Tranquil and unspoilt places



## Tranquillity

The National Park Authority, with its partners, will monitor changes in tranquillity within the National Park:

- **Key data:** Level of tranquillity according to the index of tranquillity.
- **Current position:** Measure(s) to be decided based on CPRE data.
- **Data source:** Campaign to Protect Rural England (2006) *National Tranquillity Mapping*, Campaign to Protect Rural England
- **Responsibility for data collection:** CPRE and South Downs National Park Authority.

## Dark night skies

The National Park Authority, with its partners, will map the extent of 'dark night skies' and monitor changes in levels of light saturation within the National Park:

- **Key data:** Extent of dark night skies within the National Park area.
- **Current position:** Measure(s) to be decided based on CPRE data.
- **Data source:** Campaign to Protect Rural England (2003) *Dark Skies Mapping*, Campaign to Protect Rural England
- **Responsibility for data collection:** CPRE and South Downs National Park Authority.



## Chapter 4

# A RICH VARIETY OF WILDLIFE AND HABITATS INCLUDING RARE AND INTERNATIONALLY IMPORTANT SPECIES

The unique combination of geology and micro-climates of the South Downs has created a rich mosaic of habitats that supports many rare and internationally important wildlife species. Sheep-grazed downland is the iconic habitat of the chalk landscape. Here you can find rare plants such as the round-headed rampion, orchids ranging from the burnt orchid and early spider orchid to autumn lady's tresses, and butterflies including the Adonis blue and chalkhill blue.

The greensand of the Western Weald contains important lowland heathland habitats including the internationally designated Woolmer Forest, the only site in the British Isles where all our native reptile and amphibian species are found. There are large areas of ancient woodland, for example, the yew woodlands of Kingley Vale and the magnificent 'hanging' woodlands of the Hampshire Hangers.

The extensive farmland habitats of the South Downs are important for many species of wildlife, including rare arable wildflowers and nationally declining farmland birds. Corn bunting, skylark, lapwing, yellowhammer and grey partridge are notable examples.

The river valleys intersecting the South Downs support wetland habitats and a wealth of birdlife, notably at Pulborough Brooks. Many fish, amphibians and invertebrates thrive in the clear chalk streams of the Meon and Itchen in Hampshire where elusive wild mammals such as otter and water vole may also be spotted. The extensive chalk sea cliffs and shoreline in the east host a wide range of coastal wildlife including breeding colonies of seabirds such as kittiwakes and fulmars.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> South Downs National Park Authority (2011) *Special Qualities of the South Downs National Park*, South Downs National Park Authority

In the past, conservation effort has often focused on specific species, habitats and sites. This approach has been partially successful with targeted conservation efforts turning around the fate of many species and extensive new areas of habitat being created. However, other species and habitats have continued to decline both nationally<sup>15</sup> and within the National Park.<sup>16</sup>

The *Natural Environment White Paper for England* (2011)<sup>17</sup> is based on the principle that nature is often taken for granted and undervalued, but that people cannot do without the benefits and services it provides, and advocates a landscape-scale approach to conservation. The *Water Framework Directive*<sup>18</sup> supports this call for a landscape-scale approach to the conservation of wildlife and habitats.

In 2008, a wide consultation was held in the south east to develop a landscape-scale approach to conservation by identifying 'Biodiversity Opportunity Areas' (BOAs).<sup>19</sup> BOAs were selected for their potential for wildlife enhancement and for their potential to create a good ecological network for the region. Nearly half (46 per cent) of the National Park is covered by BOAs.

There are a large number of other biodiversity-led landscape initiatives in or being developed for the National Park including:

- The South Downs Way Ahead Nature Improvement Area (NIA) – a chalk grassland focused project;
- Arun and Rother Connections – a wetland project;
- South Downs Wooded Heaths Partnership – a heathland project;
- West Weald Landscape Partnership – a woodland project;
- Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) for Hampshire and Sussex;

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15 Defra (2011) *Biodiversity Indicators in Your Pocket*, Defra (National biodiversity indicators)

16 Hampshire and Sussex Biodiversity Record Centres

17 Defra (2011) *Natural Environment White Paper for England*, Defra

18 Environment Agency (2000) *EU Water Framework Directive*, Environment Agency

19 Hampshire and Sussex Biodiversity Record Centres (2010) (*Target Area Identification*)

- Local Wildlife Sites Partnerships (e.g. West Sussex);
- Local Rivers Trusts; and
- Water Framework Directive projects e.g. Adur and Ouse.

Farming and forestry have shaped the wildlife and habitats of the area for thousands of years, and have been instrumental in creating and maintaining the area's special qualities. For example, chalk downland – perhaps the most iconic habitat of the National Park – owes its existence to centuries of sheep farming.

However, the needs of land managers and wildlife do not always align. Changes in the economy, agricultural policy and the application of new technologies resulted in more intensive agriculture in recent decades which has had a devastating impact on many farmland species.

It's not all bad news though – in recent years targeted conservation efforts, sensitive land management and landscape-scale coordination have led to the recovery of some of the special wildlife and habitats of the South Downs.

While we have reasonably good data for land covered by agri-environment schemes and England Woodland Grant Schemes (EWGS), there is a significant lack of data on wildlife and habitats for farmland not under environmental land management agreements. This data gap could be partially addressed by targeted species and habitat monitoring work, for example, bat surveys.



**We need data on targeted species and habitats.**

#### Box 4.1 Jewels in the crown of the South Downs

The National Park has a very high density of sites designated for their wildlife value:

1. The Arun Valley is designated as a RAMSAR site, a wetland of global importance. This site is of outstanding importance for its wintering waterfowl, breeding waders, rare wetland invertebrates and scarce plants.
2. There are 13 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) in the National Park, which are protected by UK and EU legislation. Woolmer Forest SAC is the only site in England which is home to all of our native species of reptiles and amphibians. Two of the SACs in the National Park are also designated as European Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for their international importance for birds. All the SACs and SPAs in the National Park are also designated as SSSIs.
3. There are also nine National Nature Reserves (NNRs)<sup>20</sup> within the National Park, which are sites of national importance for their biodiversity value. All of these are also designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). Examples of NNRs are Castle Hill NNR near Brighton, an outstanding area of chalk downland, and Kingley Vale NNR, one of Europe's finest yew forests.
4. In total, there are 86 SSSIs in the National Park (covering 6 per cent of the area).
5. 853 sites (9 per cent of the National Park area) are locally designated wildlife sites described as either Local Wildlife Sites, Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCIs) or Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs).

Table 4.1 Designated sites within the National Park

Designation	No. of sites wholly/ partly within National Park	Area within National Park (ha)
Ramsar Sites	1	530.4
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)	13	2,782.6
Special Protection Areas (SPA)	2	1,715.8
National Nature Reserves (NNR)	9	840.1
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) <sup>21</sup>	86	9,945.5
Local Wildlife Sites (SINC/ SNCI)	853	14,279.4

20 In the UK, all National Nature Reserves, Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas are also designated SSSIs

21 *Ibid*

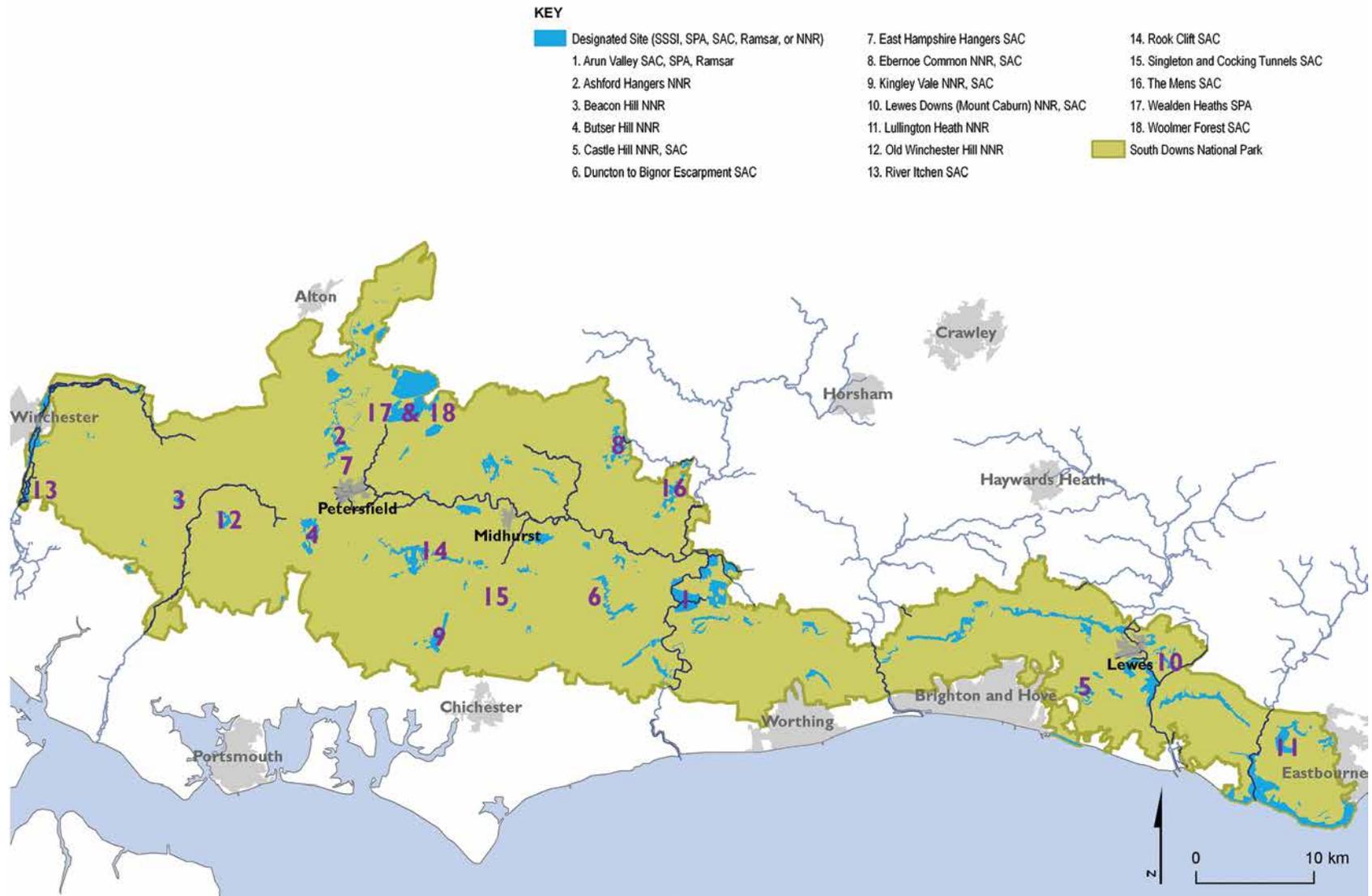
## Map 4.1

Distribution of designated wildlife sites of national and/or international importance, within the National Park

Maps prepared by:  
GeoSpec, University of  
Brighton; April 2012.

Source: Natural England,  
2011

Ordnance Survey Crown  
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100050083.



## Habitats

The National Park has an incredibly rich and diverse array of wildlife habitats, many of which are recognised as national and European priorities for wildlife. A large percentage of the National Park is classified as farmland, which includes important wildlife habitats such as unimproved and semi-improved grassland, arable land and hedgerows. Farmland habitats support populations of many native species, including some which are rare and threatened such as grey partridge and corn marigold. Heathland habitats in the National Park are also very important for wildlife, supporting distinctive plant communities and heathland specialists, for example, the silver-studded blue butterfly.

During World War II many of the chalk grassland sites in the South Downs were ploughed and have since remained in cultivation. West of the River Arun, where the National Park is more wooded, there are important features such as the 'hanger' woodlands of the steep escarpments. Woodland habitats are recognised for their biodiversity value and often support specialist species such as the barbastelle bat and our native bluebell.

In addition to their biodiversity benefits, the wildlife habitats of the National Park provide a wide range of other benefits such as recreational and educational opportunities, tranquillity and economic returns.



### Key facts: Wildlife habitats

- Farmland habitats (85 per cent – this includes some woodland, arable, hedgerows and other habitats)
- Chalk grassland (4 per cent)
- Lowland heath (1 per cent)
- Woodland (23.8 per cent) – approximately half of which is ancient woodland)
- Floodplain grazing marsh (1.5 per cent)
- Rivers and streams (321km of main river)
- Coastal and marine habitats (6.7km<sup>2</sup>, including 20km of coastline)
- Urban habitats



Levin Down © Mark Monk-Terry/Sussex Wildlife Trust

## Chalk grassland

Chalk grassland is one of the priority habitats of the South Downs, covering 5,608ha of the National Park (4 per cent). It is often referred to as the European equivalent of tropical rainforest due to the rich diversity of species it supports. However, chalk grassland has suffered badly from loss and fragmentation both nationally and within the National Park.<sup>22</sup>



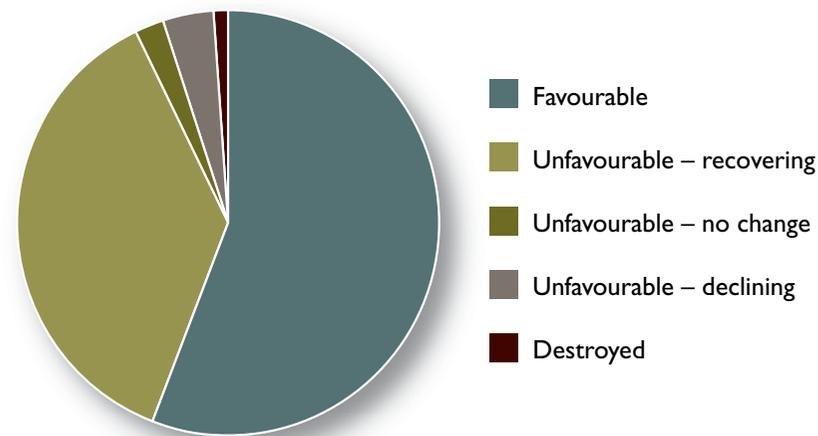
### Key facts: Chalk grassland

- 36 per cent of the chalk grassland sites within the National Park are less than 1ha in size.
- Only 45 chalk grassland sites are over 10ha in size.
- Only 45 per cent of chalk grassland in the National Park is designated as SSSI, meaning that over half does not benefit from significant legal protection.



Malling Down © Neil Fletcher/Sussex Wildlife Trust

Figure 4.1 Chalk grassland SSSI units in the National Park



Source: Natural England (2012) *England SSSI Unit Condition Assessments*, Natural England. Analysis by Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre

## Heathland

Heathland is another national priority habitat found within the National Park. Heathlands are of considerable international biodiversity importance. However, they are very vulnerable to rapid loss and degradation, for example, through neglect. Lowland heathlands are confined to the western margins of north-west Europe and have suffered dramatic losses in recent decades. Map 4.2 shows heathland distribution in the National Park.

There are several different types of heathland habitat, including wooded heath and chalk heath. Chalk heath is a particularly rare habitat type; Lullington Heath National Nature Reserve near Eastbourne is one of the largest areas of chalk heath in Britain.

22 Information derived from Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre and Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre datasets in 2010

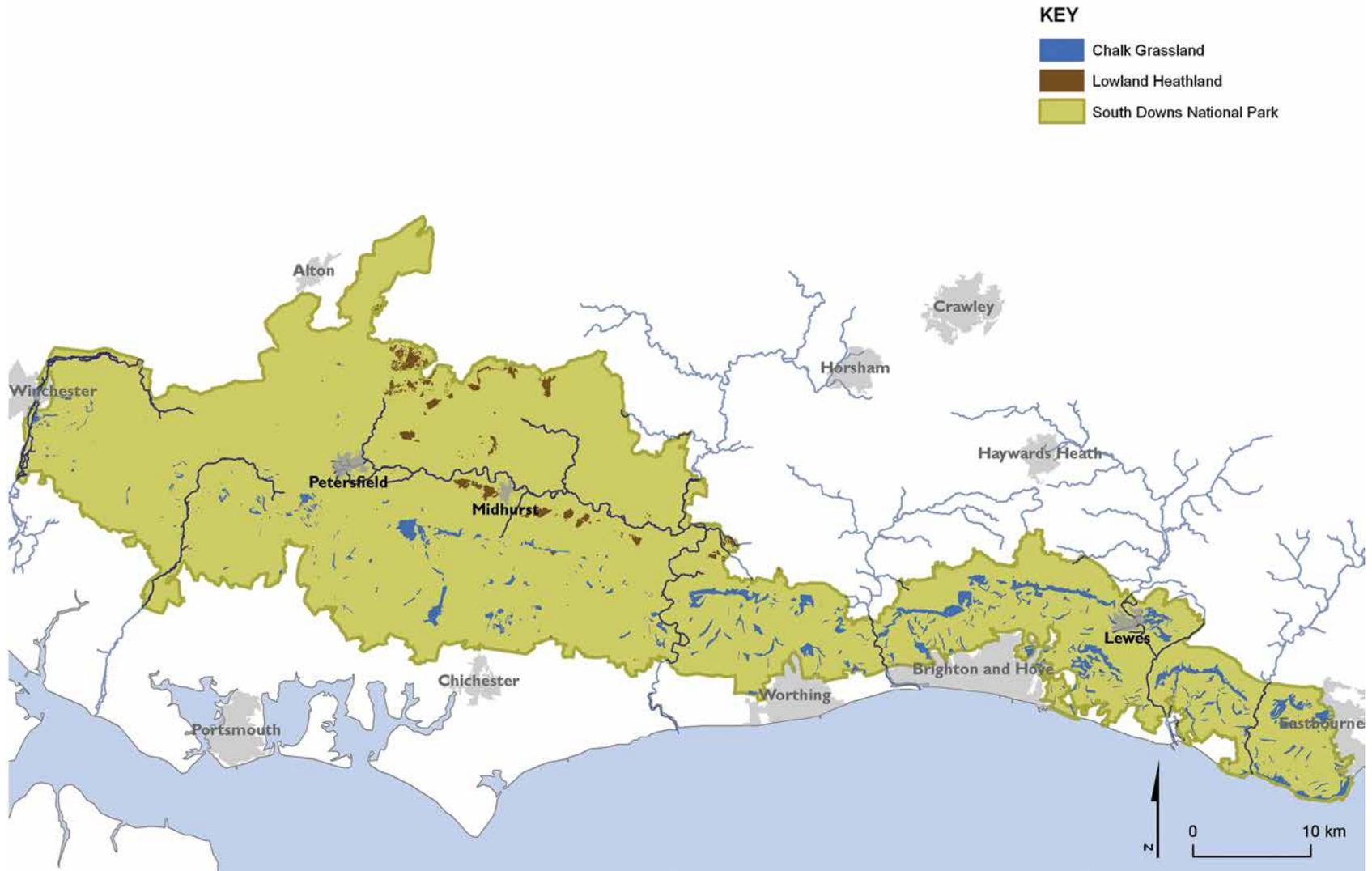
## Map 4.2

Chalk grassland and lowland heathland distribution within the South Downs National Park

Maps prepared by:  
GeoSpec, University of  
Brighton; February 2012.

Source: Hampshire  
Biodiversity Information  
Centre and Sussex  
Biodiversity Record  
Centre, 2011

Ordnance Survey Crown  
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100050083.



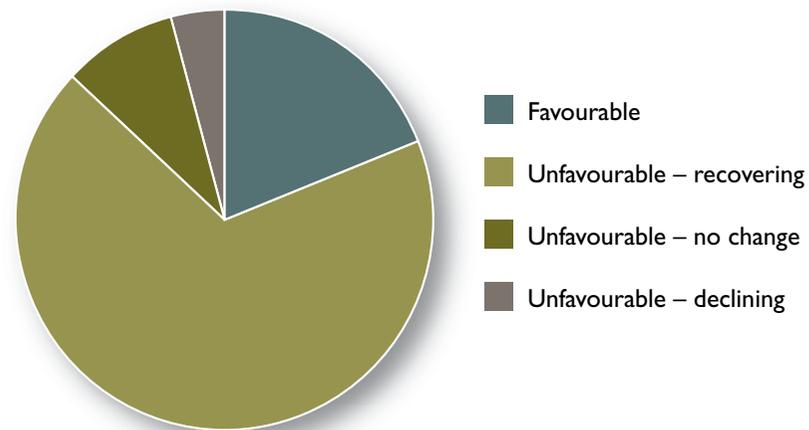
## Key facts: Heathland

- Over 95 per cent of lowland heathlands have been lost globally.
- There is 1,544ha of lowland heathland remaining within the National Park, which represents an important international resource.
- Just over half (55 per cent) of the heathland within the National Park is designated as SSSI.



Graffham Common © Miles Davis/Sussex Wildlife Trust

Figure 4.2 Heathland SSSI units in the National Park



Source: Natural England (2012) *England SSSI Unit Condition Assessments*, Natural England. Analysis by Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre

### Ancient woodland

Ancient woodland is a nationally important and threatened habitat, and its existence over hundreds of years has preserved irreplaceable ecological and historical features.<sup>23</sup> Ancient woodland in the National Park includes a few surviving remnants of large-leaved lime woodland, which may closely resemble the post-glacial 'wildwood' that covered the South Downs prior to Neolithic forest clearance some 6,000 years ago.<sup>24</sup> This valuable resource is increasingly under threat from development pressure and lack of appropriate management.

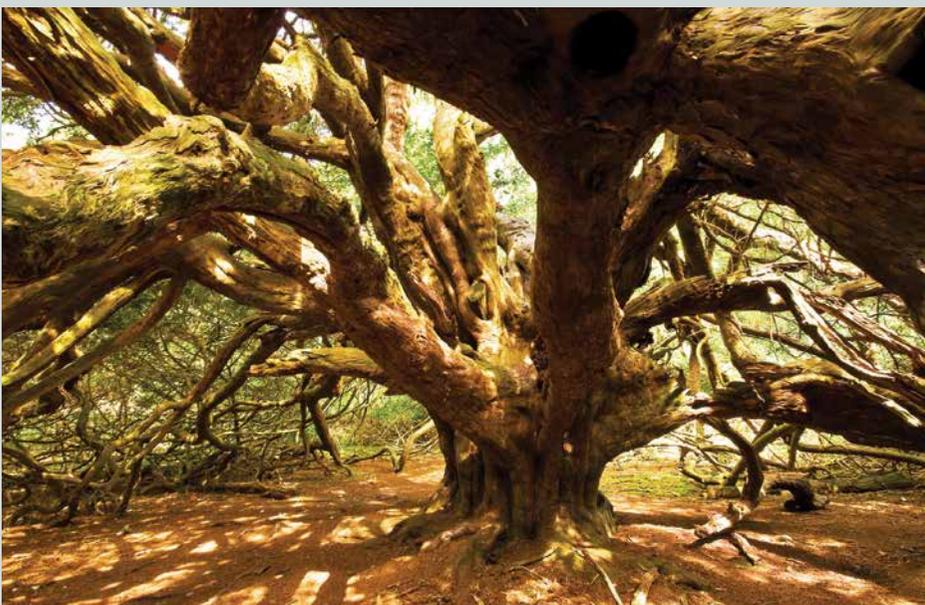
23 Victoria Hume and Matthew Grose (2010) *West Sussex Ancient Woodland Survey Report: Weald and Downs Ancient Woodland Survey 2007–2010*, Sussex Biodiversity Centre

24 Natural England (1995) *South Downs Natural Area Profile*, Natural England



## Key facts: Ancient woodland

- Ancient woodland covers 17,351 ha within the National Park – more than five times the national average.<sup>25</sup>
- The spread of woodland cover across the National Park is uneven, with the west being significantly more wooded than the east.
- The condition of ancient woodland sites is not well known, apart from those cases where woodland forms part or all of an SSSI (only 8 per cent of the ancient woodland resource within the National Park), but 70 per cent of the ancient woodland within SSSIs is considered to be in favourable condition.

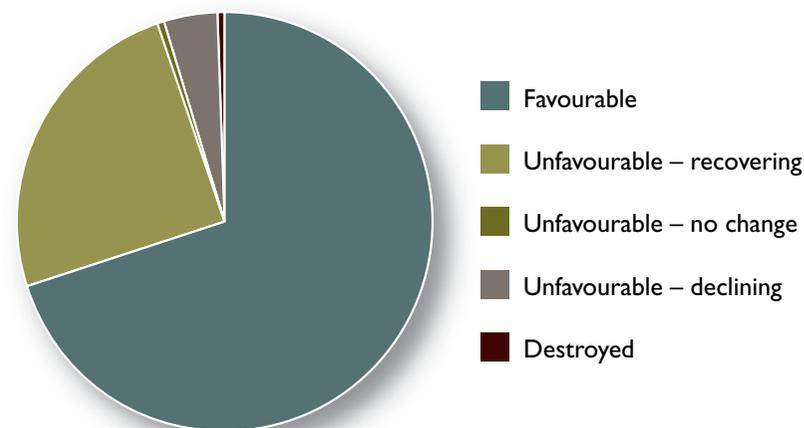


Ancient yews at Kingley Vale © [www.jamesgilesphotography.co.uk](http://www.jamesgilesphotography.co.uk)

Woodland habitats of particular value for biodiversity within the National Park include:

- 'hanger' woodlands (which cling to steep greensand and chalk slopes);
- yew forests (for example, Kingley Vale);
- ancient wood pasture (for example, Ebernoe Common near Petworth);
- wooded heaths (for example, Blackdown near Haslemere);
- 'rews and shaws' (linear strips of ancient woodland along field edges and streams); and
- 'veteran' trees.

Figure 4.3 Ancient woodland SSSI units in the National Park



Source: Natural England (2012) *England SSSI Unit Condition Assessments*, Natural England. Analysis by Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre

25 Defra/Forestry Commission England (2005) *Keepers of Time: A Statement of Policy for England's Ancient and Native Woodland*, Defra/Forestry Commission

## Case Study Michael Prior



Michael Prior is Head Forester at Stansted Park in West Sussex which was a joint winner of the Duke of Cornwall Award for Multi-purpose Woodlands in 2010. In 1983 the 10th Earl of Bessborough gifted the estate to the Stansted Park Foundation which is tasked with managing the estate for the benefit of the nation in perpetuity.

“We have 464ha of woodlands on the estate, virtually all of which is classed as either Ancient Semi-natural Woodland or Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites. Our trees range from commercial conifers through worked sweet chestnut and hazel coppice to old broadleaf woodland. The forest is bisected by large open vistas which are major features of the Grade I listed Park and are managed under the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme along with other parkland features.

The forest is entered into the English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) and our management focuses on producing sustainable timber at the same time as restoring landscape, conserving wildlife and managing extensive public access. Wherever possible we work to produce saleable woodland products from across all the different woods. Profits are returned to the Foundation, helping to support this work.

I believe the biggest threat to woodland is lack of management. The restoration of derelict woodland within the National Park could bring many benefits, helping to produce utilisable timber and stimulating the local economy.”

## Farmland

Farmland includes wildlife habitats such as grassland, arable land and hedgerows. The quality of farmland habitats for wildlife can vary enormously, ranging from species-rich unimproved grasslands to intensively managed grasslands which support very little wildlife.



*Diverse farmland near Firlle ©Amanda Davey*

Arable cropland is a great place to see some of the UK’s rarest farmland birds. These include corn bunting, grey partridge, skylark and stone curlew. The National Park is also considered to be a national hotspot for rare arable plants. In addition to plants and birds, farmland habitats also support some interesting and special mammals such as harvest mouse and brown hare. Farm hedges and field margins act as ‘wildlife corridors’ for many species including bats.

While the extent of farmland has probably not changed significantly over the past century, the balance of different uses has varied a great deal, and over the last 50–100 years the quality of many farmland habitats for wildlife has declined dramatically. Increasing intensification of agriculture as a result of farming subsidies in the latter half of the 20th century had a devastating impact upon many species of wildlife dependent on farmland habitats. For example, modern

herbicides and seed cleaning methods reduced the presence of arable plants such as rough poppy, and changes in arable cropping practices such as a switch from spring to autumn sown cereals has reduced habitat and food availability for farmland birds and other wildlife. Proportions of different habitats which make up farmland have also changed in recent history, for example, significant amounts of sheep-grazed chalk downland were ploughed up during and after World War II to grow crops such as wheat and barley, and over the past decade vineyards have increased in number.



*Rough poppy and corn marigold* © Natural England

Over the past decade or so, agri-environment schemes have helped to address declines in some farmland species. There is extensive data on farmland habitats (extent, condition and management activities) for farmland under agri-environment agreements. Some wildlife species data for farmland sites is collected by landowners, volunteers and conservation organisations.



**We need data on wildlife and habitats for farmland not under environmental land management agreements.**

### Rivers and streams

The rivers and streams of the National Park support a rich and diverse array of habitats and species. Wildlife habitats adjacent to rivers and streams include semi-natural riparian vegetation, wet woodland and wet grassland, supporting invertebrates, riverine bird species and also populations of mammals such as water shrew, otter and water vole. The fish species in these rivers and streams include salmon, brown trout, bullhead, European eel and brook lamprey:

- Many of the rivers in the National Park, such as the Arun, the Rother, and the Ouse, support important fish nurseries. However, the fish populations of the rivers (the Itchen, in particular), have been modified by introductions of farm reared trout and the removal of other species.<sup>26</sup>
- The chalk streams of the National Park are also very important for their biodiversity value – a recent survey by Nigel Holmes<sup>27</sup> stated that Sussex has some of the finest examples of natural chalk stream habitats in the country.
- 'Flashy rivers' such as the Ouse and Cuckmere support ecological communities associated with clay dominated lowland rivers including good populations of fish such as brown trout, roach, pike, rudd, bream, tench, perch, bullhead, stone loach, minnow, brook lamprey and European eel. They are also home to a wide range of other species.

Other freshwater habitats in the National Park important for their wildlife value include lakes, reedbeds, ponds (for example, dewponds), canals and freshwater grazing marsh.

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<sup>26</sup> Environment Agency (2006) *The Test and Itchen Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy*, Environment Agency

<sup>27</sup> Nigel Holmes (2010) *Sussex Chalk Streams Report*, unpublished



*Brown trout © Sussex Wildlife Trust*

The 'ecological status' of UK rivers and streams is assessed under the Water Framework Directive<sup>28</sup> (along with groundwater status and quality). More information can be found in the Water Fact File.

## Case Study Fran Southgate



Fran Southgate is the Wetlands Officer for Sussex Wildlife Trust. Her role includes providing free advice on ways of restoring wetlands and improving water resources across the county.

"Fresh water is one of our most valuable natural resources. In the south east of England too many people have taken too much water from our environment, and many wetlands and their wildlife have suffered significant declines as a result.

Our wetlands are finally being recognised for their true value, providing us with fuel, flood storage, food, clean water, fertile soils and other valuable environmental 'services'. Wherever possible, we are taking steps to safeguard and restore them.

Surface wetlands such as ponds are important in the National Park because most water seeps through the naturally porous chalk into aquifers. We support the restoration and re-creation of wetlands wherever viable, as well as working with partners such as the South Downs National Park Authority to identify some of our rarest wetland habitats. Our recent study of chalk streams in Sussex mapped more than 135km of this internationally rare habitat – evidence that will help us all to protect these precious wetlands in the long term.

We are also working with local people to tackle bigger wetland issues such as climate change, flooding and drought. In April 2012, the Arun and Rother Connections (ARC) Partnership secured funding to pay for landscape scale wetland restoration work and community engagement around these two major rivers. The Partnership hopes to tackle issues such as the spread of non-native invasive species like giant hogweed and Australian swamp stonecrop, which have caused significant damage to our native wildlife and to local tourism and farming.

In the long term, we hope that this work will bring people closer to their local freshwater environment, improve and expand wetland habitats such as fen and reedbed, and promote recovery of some of the National Park's rarer wetland species such as water vole and the dazzling common club-tail dragonfly."

28 Environment Agency (2009) *South East River Basin Management Plan*, Environment Agency

## Coastal and marine

Coastal and marine habitats make up a relatively small proportion of the National Park. However, they are very important for their landscape, biodiversity and cultural value. Activities such as fishing and navigational and marine aggregate dredging have had negative impacts on coastal and marine biodiversity, but focus on conservation work in recent years has helped to safeguard some marine species and habitats.



### Key facts: Coastal and marine



Beachy Head cliffs © Eastbourne Tourism Department

- The coastal habitats within the National Park include maritime cliffs and slopes and saline lagoons.
- The principal marine and estuarine habitats in the National Park include:
  - coastal saltmarsh;
  - intertidal rock (including intertidal chalk); and
  - intertidal sediment (predominantly shingle).
- Examples of coastal and marine plant species are:
  - hoary stock;
  - rock sea-lavender; and
  - sea-heath.

- Breeding birds found in these habitats include:
  - fulmars;
  - kittiwakes; and
  - peregrines.
- Between Seaford and Beachy Head there are surviving areas of clifftop chalk heath, a very rare habitat type.
- The chalk cliffs are in a constant state of erosion, but this does not have a significant impact on their importance for biodiversity as there is no net loss of habitat.
- The shingle in the Seaford to Beachy Head SSSI supports a distinctive flora with species such as curled dock, sea beet, yellow horned-poppy and sea bindweed. The shingle bank habitat supports a number of uncommon centipedes, some of which have not been recorded anywhere else in the UK.
- There are some saline lagoons within the National Park; these shallow areas of brackish water are home to a wide range of invertebrates and other wildlife.



Fulmar © Sussex Wildlife Trust

The National Park contains four coastal plain estuaries: the Arun, Adur, Ouse and Cuckmere. Of these, only the full extent of the Cuckmere estuary is within the National Park boundary. Estuarine habitats host a diversity of species including migrant species such as European eel and sea trout. Saltmarsh habitat can be found in all four estuaries although in fairly small patches. The former meanders of the estuaries and the surrounding brackish and freshwater marshes support many rare and scarce invertebrates as well as regionally important amphibian populations, such as the common toad. These, in turn, support populations of breeding birds including nationally important populations of migrant birds. Saltmarsh habitat has declined significantly in the UK over the 20th century mainly due to draining of estuaries to support port development and urban expansion.

Intertidal wave-cut chalk platforms occur along a 22km stretch of shore from Beachy Head westwards to Seaford Head, and from Newhaven to Brighton marina (of which approximately 12km is in the National Park). A rich variety of seaweed is found in the mid-shore zone, together with mussels, limpets, periwinkles and barnacles. Certain algae, which are present in damp, shady places within caves at the base of the chalk cliffs, are rare or threatened. Species of interest include the burrowing piddock, the squat lobster and the sea urchin *Psammechinus miliaris*.



*Squat lobster* © Rohan Holt

## Species

The National Park supports a wealth of wildlife including iconic species such as burnt orchid, round-headed rampion, otter, skylark, barn owl and brown trout. It is also home to less well-known species such as the barbastelle bat, the chalk carpet moth and sundew (a carnivorous plant).

Many of the species found in the National Park are rare and localised: for example, the greater mouse-eared bat. The National Park and Bognor Regis are the only places in the UK where this species has been recently recorded. The last known British colony disappeared in 1985, however a single male was discovered in the National Park in 2002 and has been recorded at the same location every year since.



*Sundew* © Sussex Wildlife Trust

Rare species are often restricted to habitats which are also rare. Populations of some species, such as the Adonis blue butterfly, have recently shown signs of recovery in the National Park as a result of conservation efforts and sensitive land management. In addition, some species are benefiting from climate change by extending their distribution and the range of habitats they are able to utilise – the silver-spotted skipper butterfly is a good example of this.

#### **Box 4.2 Habitat specialist species**

Examples of species which are habitat specialists:

- arable plants such as corn marigold;
- bee orchid (chalk downland);
- Adonis blue butterfly (chalk downland);
- purple emperor butterfly (broadleaved woodland); and
- nightjar (heathland and open woodland with clearings).



*Bee orchid* © Sussex Wildlife Trust

### Box 4.3 Invasive species

A significant cause of decline for some of our native wildlife and habitats is the spread of invasive non-native species. These are exotic species which have been introduced (either deliberately or by accident) into our countryside. Invasive non-native species are now regarded as the second greatest threat to global biodiversity after habitat loss and they are causing significant problems for a wide range of species and habitats across the National Park, for example:

- Water vole populations across the National Park have been devastated by American mink.
- Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed and giant hogweed are examples of some of the invasive, non-native plant species which are contributing to the decline of native wildlife and habitats.
- Many invasive species are expensive and difficult to control – and in some cases, such as the signal crayfish, populations are almost impossible to eradicate once established.



**We need data on the distribution and density of many invasive non-native species.**

The most common and widespread invasive species are often found in wetland habitats, for example, a recent survey of the Arun and Rother river catchments showed that the problem of invasive, non-native species such as Himalayan balsam and giant hogweed was far greater than originally predicted. In woodland and heathland habitats *Rhododendron ponticum* is among the most widespread and damaging invasive species.

We have good baseline and trend data for many native species thanks to the work of many organisations, individuals and volunteers. Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) and Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC) play a key role in generating, collating and analysing biodiversity data for the National Park.

We have relatively comprehensive datasets for some groups of species such as birds and butterflies.



**We need more data on some other species groups such as fungi.**

The following species datasets have been selected to monitor for this report (and subsequent editions) due to comprehensive baseline data, the existence of standard monitoring schemes for these species, association with different priority habitat types, potential to act as flagship species and potential to act as environmental indicators.



## Key data: A rich variety of wildlife and habitats including rare and internationally important species

### Biodiversity-led landscape initiatives

It can be difficult to gather and analyse meaningful data to monitor the success of biodiversity conservation at the landscape scale. However, some species (or species groups) are considered to be good environmental indicators of landscape quality and connectivity. Bats and the Duke of Burgundy butterfly have been selected as appropriate indicators of landscape-scale activity for the South Downs National Park as they are national landscape-scale indicators for Defra and Butterfly Conservation respectively.

- **Key data:** Bat populations (Defra bat index) and Duke of Burgundy butterfly populations will be monitored as indicators of landscape-scale conservation.
- **Current position:** The Defra bat index measures national population changes in six widespread bat species. Bat populations experienced major declines both nationally and in the National Park during the latter half of the 20th century. However, since 2000, bat populations in England have increased by 21 per cent.
- The Duke of Burgundy is one of Britain's fastest declining butterflies, having declined nationally by nearly 50 per cent over the past 10 years. However the National Park is one of our national strongholds for this rare butterfly, and has some of the largest remaining colonies in the country (e.g. at Butser Hill).
- **Data source:** Butterfly Conservation, *National Bat Monitoring Programme*, Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre and Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre
- **Responsibility for data collation:** Bat Conservation Trust, Butterfly Conservation, Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre and Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre.

### Farmland Birds

- **Key data:** Defra national Farmland Bird Index.
- **Current position:** Breeding farmland bird populations in the UK are at their lowest levels ever recorded, at half of what they were in 1970. Most of the declines occurred between the late seventies and the early nineties, but there

has also been a national decline of 9.4 per cent overall in the last five years (Defra Biodiversity Indicators 2011). *There is currently insufficient data to estimate breeding farmland bird populations and trends for the National Park accurately.*



**We need data on farmland birds.**

- This data gap can be addressed by identifying and monitoring more survey sites in the area.
- **Data source:** Defra (2011) *Wild Bird Populations in Britain 1970–2010*, Defra
- **Responsibility for data collection:** Defra/RSPB/British Trust for Ornithology.

### Local wildlife sites

- **Key data:** A local authority single dataset indicator for the condition of Local Wildlife Sites has been adopted by local authorities across the National Park.
- **Current position:** In total there are 861 Local Wildlife Sites (SNICs/SINCs) within the National Park. Of these, 47 per cent (408) are assessed as being in positive conservation management, 9 per cent (77) are not in positive management, and the management is unknown for 44 per cent (381).
- **Data source:** Hampshire, East Sussex and West Sussex County Council and Brighton and Hove City Council
- **Responsibility for data collection:** Local authorities.

### Condition of protected sites

- **Key data:** Condition of SSSI sites.
- **Current position:** 48.8 per cent of the SSSI units in the National Park are assessed as being in favourable condition (compared to a national average of 44.9 per cent), and 38.7 per cent are assessed as unfavourable but recovering (compared to 30.6 per cent nationally).
- **Data source:** Natural England (2012) *England SSSI Unit Condition Assessments*, Natural England. Analysis by Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre

- **Responsibility for data collection:** Natural England.

## Habitat quality

- **Key data:** Selected priority habitat extent and condition.
- **Current position for chalk downland:** 5,608ha within the National Park with 45 per cent designated as SSSI, and 56 per cent of these assessed as being in favourable condition.
- **Current position for lowland heathland:** 1,544ha of lowland heathland within the National Park with 55 per cent designated as SSSI, and 19 per cent of these assessed as being in favourable condition.
- **Current position for ancient woodland:** 17,351ha within the National Park. The condition is not well known, apart from where it forms part of an SSSI, which is only 8 per cent of ancient woodland within the National Park. 70 per cent of the ancient woodland within SSSIs in the National Park is assessed as being in favourable condition.
- **Data source:** Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre, Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre, Natural England (2012) *England SSSI Unit Condition Assessments*, Natural England. Analysis by Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre
- **Responsibility for data collection:** Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre and Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre, Natural England.

## Ecological status of rivers and lakes

- **Key data:** Water Framework Directive monitoring.
- **Current position for the SDNP:**
  - 15 per cent of rivers are classified as ‘good or high ecological status’.
  - 9.7 per cent of lakes are classified as ‘good or high ecological status’.
- **Data source:** Environment Agency (2012) *Water Framework Directive Data*, Environment Agency.
- **Responsibility for data collection:** Environment Agency.

## Habitat specialist butterflies

- **Key data:** Defra national biodiversity indicator.<sup>29</sup>

### Pearl-bordered fritillary (woodland specialist):

- **Current position:** The national population declined by 60 per cent between 1970 and 1998, and declined by a further third by 2004. Although the National Park retains some colonies (most notably Rewell Wood in West Sussex), the national trend has been mirrored here with reduced numbers of sites and generally dwindling colony sizes.

### Adonis blue (chalk downland specialist):

- **Current position:** While subject to a long-term decline in numbers in Britain, the Adonis blue has shown some signs of recovery since the early 1980s. The past decade has seen the small and fragmented populations of the National Park gradually increase in size, particularly in the east.

### Silver-studded blue (heathland specialist):

- **Current position:** Silver-studded blue populations have declined both nationally and in the National Park over the last century with accelerated rates of decline over the past few decades (breeding records have declined by nearly half over the past 30 years). Populations in the National Park are mostly small and isolated. Populations on Iping and Stedham commons have recovered and stabilised after near extinction on these sites.
- **Data source:** Butterfly Conservation, Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre and Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre
- **Responsibility for data collection:** Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre and Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre.

## Wetland specialist species

- **Key data:** Water vole population.
- **Current position:** The water vole is Britain’s fastest declining mammal with the national population declining by 90–95 per cent over the past few decades. This decline has been mirrored in the National Park. However, the last few years there have been signs of a promising population recovery in some parts of the National Park.
- **Data source:** Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre and Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre
- **Responsibility for data collection:** Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre and Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre.

29. Defra (2011)



## Chapter 5

# AN ENVIRONMENT SHAPED BY CENTURIES OF FARMING AND EMBRACING NEW ENTERPRISE

The rural economy has strongly influenced the landscape and over 80 per cent of the South Downs is farmed. Past agricultural practices have produced some nationally valuable habitats including chalk downland and lowland heath, with traditional breeds specific to the area such as Southdown and Hampshire Down sheep significant in the past and still bred today. Many farmers and landowners are helping to conserve and enhance important habitats through environmental stewardship schemes. Large estates such as Goodwood, Cowdray, Petworth and Firle, with their designed parklands, have a significant effect on the landscape and the rural economy. The ownership of large areas of the eastern downs by local authorities or the National Trust is a legacy of the early 20th century conservation movements to protect the iconic cliffs and downs and the water supply to coastal towns.

Farming has always responded to the economy of the day and continues to do so. Some farmers are diversifying their businesses, for example by providing tourist accommodation and meeting the growing market for locally produced food and drink. Climate change and market forces continue to influence the landscape leading to new enterprises such as vineyards, and increasing opportunities for producing alternative energy, for example wood fuel.

However, the economy of the National Park is by no means restricted to farming. There are many popular tourist attractions and well-loved local pubs which give character to our towns and villages. The National Park is also home to a wide range of other businesses, for example new technology and science, which supports local employment.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> South Downs National Park Authority (2011) *Special Qualities of the South Downs National Park*, South Downs National Park Authority

The National Park Authority has a duty to seek to foster the social and economic well-being of the local communities within the National Park in support of its purposes. So, it is important that we understand the overall economic prosperity of the area before looking in more detail at business activity and the labour market in key areas such as farming, forestry and tourism, and the contribution that natural resources make to the rural economy.

## The local economy

In 2008, the local economy of the National Park was estimated to be worth around £2.23 billion.<sup>31</sup>

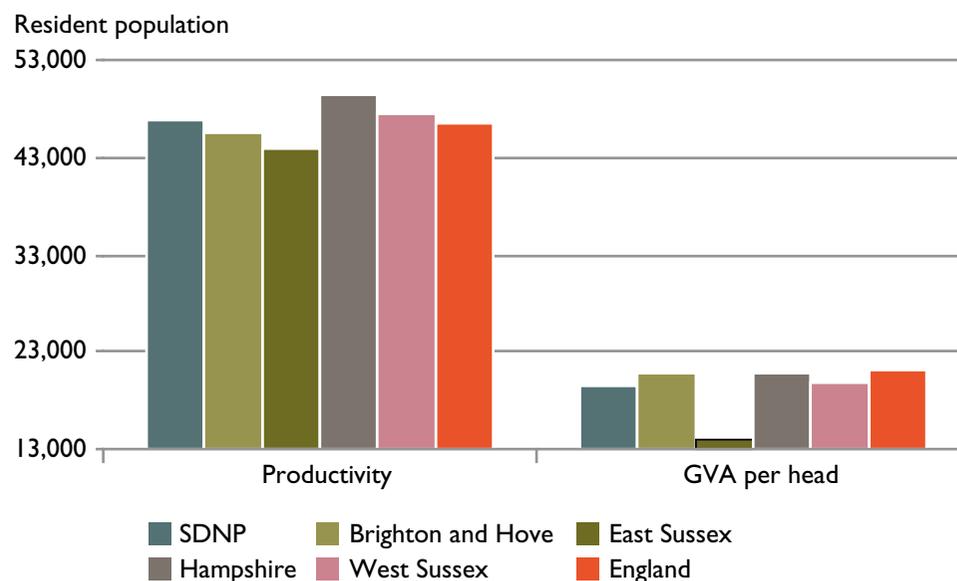
The National Park has three primary market towns – Lewes, Petersfield and Midhurst; these are the main employment hubs and provide vital services to the surrounding rural areas. They have a significant impact on the make-up, services and local economies of the National Park as do the large urban areas around the boundary, such as Southampton, Portsmouth, Chichester, Brighton and Hove and Eastbourne.

The South Downs GVA<sup>32</sup> per head of population compares well to the national, Hampshire, Brighton and Hove and West Sussex GVA, all of which are significantly higher than East Sussex. The productivity in the National Park's economy is £46,850 per employee and is around the same as the English average and slightly lower than that for Hampshire and West Sussex (Figure 5.1).

31 A district level estimate for the LSOA definition of the SDNP based on Regional Gross Value Added, Business Register and Employment Survey and Experian UK Local Market Forecasts; South East Region in Hampshire County Council (2011) *South Downs National Park Local Economy*, Hampshire County Council

32 GVA measures the contribution to the economy of each individual producer, industry or sector in the United Kingdom – the value that has been added during the process of production of goods and services

Figure 5.1 GVA per employee job and GVA per head of resident population, 2008



Source: Hampshire County Council (2011) *South Downs National Park Local Economy*, Hampshire County Council

### Use of Office for National Statistics Data

Where data is only available at the district level a **South Downs 'buffer'** has been created that covers the 16 districts which intersect a 5km zone around the National Park boundary. Data is reported for all 16 districts but the commentary concentrates on those local authorities which have land within the National Park.



For more information on ONS data.

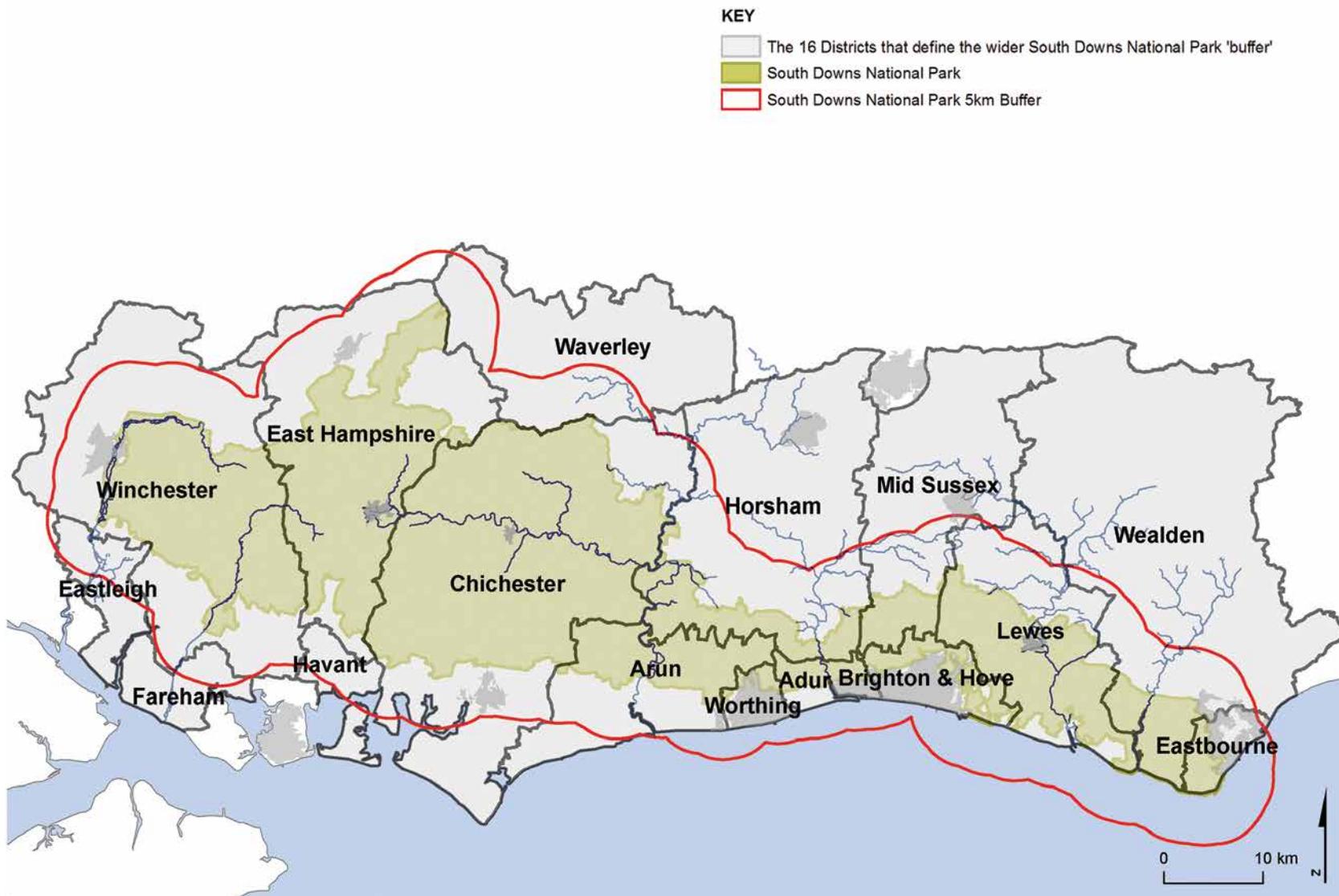
## Map 5.1

Illustrates the 5km buffer zone around the National Park which takes in 16 district and unitary authority areas

Maps prepared by:  
GeoSpec, University of  
Brighton; February 2012.

Source: South Downs  
Local Economy Report,  
Hampshire County  
Council, 2011

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## Diverse rural businesses

An estimated 8,500–11,500 business units operate within the National Park, employing between 52,000–84,000 people.<sup>33</sup> Figure 5.2 presents the breakdown of businesses by industry:

- Professional, scientific and technical businesses account for just over 15 per cent of these, closely followed by wholesale and retail trade and repair of motor vehicles. More detailed information on the professional, scientific and technical businesses is not available at the National Park level.
- The most significant difference from the south east region as a whole is the higher proportion of agriculture, forestry and fishery businesses.
- The National Park also has a slightly higher percentage of businesses in the arts, entertainment and recreation sectors, which reflects its rural nature and its popularity as a place to visit, although the percentage of businesses in the accommodation and food services sector is slightly below that of the region.
- Retail, the health sector and construction are slightly less represented compared with the south east region. This perhaps reflects the fact that these businesses are more likely to be situated in the major towns and cities immediately outside of the National Park.<sup>34</sup>
- The percentage of information and communications businesses is also slightly less than for the region.

The National Park has a higher proportion of small (10–50 employees) and micro businesses (0–9 employees) than the national levels and a smaller proportion of medium (50–249 employees) and large (more than 250 employees) sized businesses.

33 A definitive figure is difficult to arrive at as it depends on the calculation used. Source: Hampshire County Council (2011) *South Downs National Park Local Economy – ‘Neighbourhood statistics 2010’*, Hampshire County Council; Defra (2010) *Inter-Departmental Business Register 2008*, Defra

34 *Ibid*

Some evidence suggests that there are a large number of home-based businesses throughout the National Park that are not registered for VAT<sup>35</sup> or PAYE<sup>36</sup> and therefore not included in the figures above. Collectively they are likely to make a significant contribution to the local economy. Research carried out within Horsham District found that one in eight households contains a home-based business and that households in rural areas were 50 per cent more likely to have a home-based business than those in urban areas.<sup>37</sup> According to *The Petersfield Plan Baseline Report: Issues and Choices*, East Hampshire has the highest index of home working in the country.<sup>38</sup>



**We need data on the extent of home working.**

Business creation rates per head of population in the rural districts of West Sussex are higher than for the urban districts, in fact the number of jobs in the rural areas grew by 11 per cent in five years between 2003 and 2008 at a period when employment was static in West Sussex as a whole and declining in urban areas. As the National Park accounts for a large part of rural West Sussex it could be assumed that rural jobs are also growing within the National Park area although there is no data to confirm this.



**We need data on rural job growth.**



**For information on premises, business ages and business survival rates within the National Park.**

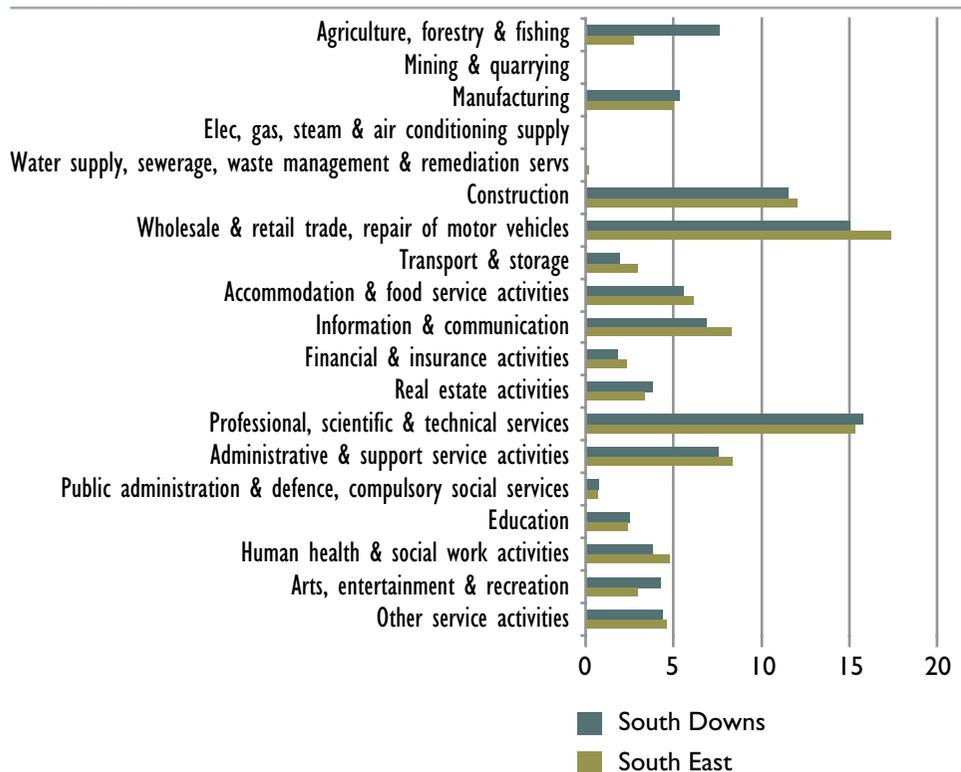
35 All businesses that are liable for VAT must register with HM Revenue & Customs. The April 2011 limit for registration is an annual turnover of £73,000 or more. Below this level registration is voluntary

36 All businesses employing any member of staff who earned over £144 per week or £523 per month in the 2011/12 tax year must register a PAYE scheme with HM Revenue and Customs

37 Horsham District Council (2008) *Home-based Businesses*, Horsham District Council

38 David Lock Associates (June 2011) *Petersfield Plan Baseline Report: Issues and Choices*, South Downs National Park Authority/East Hampshire District Council

**Figure 5.2** Comparison of percentage of businesses by industry type



Source: Defra (2010) *South Downs National Park Economic Profile – ‘Inter-Departmental Business Register 2008’*, Defra

Rural businesses show a potential for growth but remain smaller overall and survival rates are mixed although those within Chichester and Horsham districts appear to be better than average. They may be constrained by a lack of premises for expansion, access to skills and infrastructure issues such as poor broadband access and transport.<sup>39</sup>

39 Defra (2010) *South Downs National Park Economic Profile – Inter-Departmental Business Register 2008*, Defra



### Key facts: Rural business

- 78.4 per cent of businesses in the National Park employ fewer than five workers compared to 73.6 per cent in the south east and 71.1 per cent nationally
- In terms of total employment 32 per cent of jobs are in firms of less than 10 employees compared with 21 per cent of employment in firms of this size nationally
- Larger firms still account for nearly 20 per cent of employment but this is well below the national average of 30 per cent
- National Park businesses account for around 12.5 per cent of employment within the local authority districts.

Source: Tym and Partners (2012) *‘BRES 2010’ in South Downs National Park Employment Land Review*, South Downs National Park Authority

### Employment

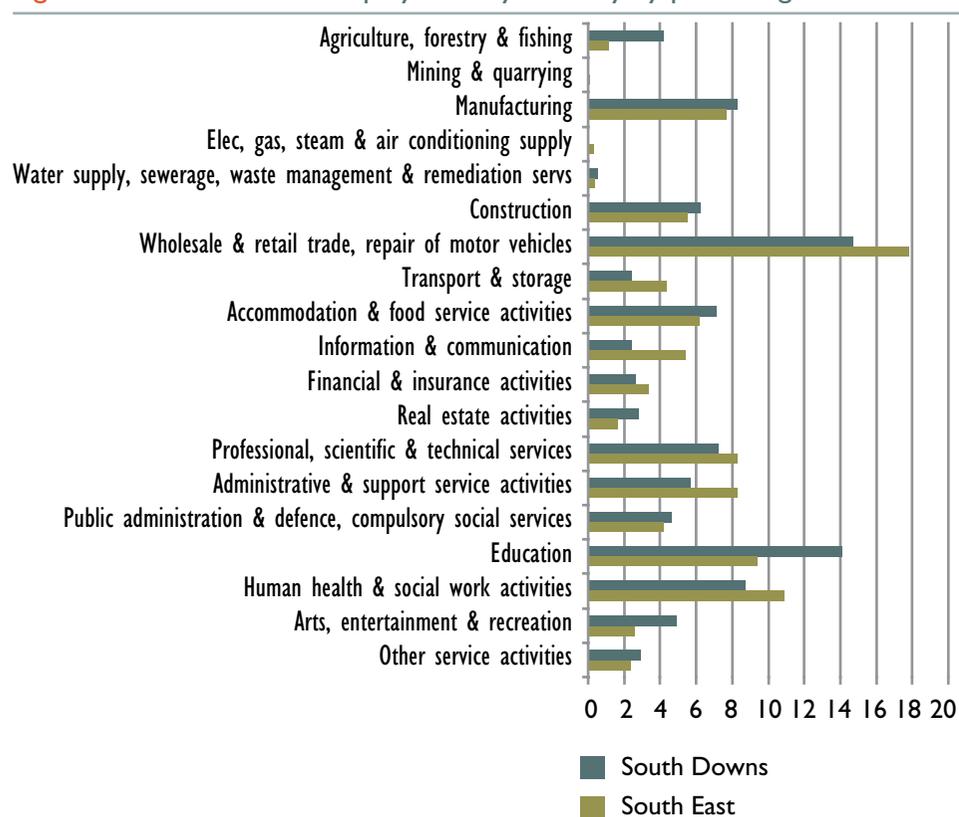
Figure 5.3 shows that the employment structure within the National Park is similar to the south east but that certain sectors have higher representation such as education, arts, entertainment and recreation, manufacturing, accommodation and food services, and agriculture, forestry and fishing. Between them they account for nearly 40 per cent of employment. Despite the high percentage of business numbers, employment in agriculture, forestry and food is only 4 per cent in the National Park although this is still significantly higher than the 1 per cent in the south east as a whole.<sup>40</sup>

Other large sectors such as wholesale and retail trade, and health and social work account for a further 24 per cent of employment but these sectors are under-represented compared to the rest of the region.<sup>41</sup>

40 *Ibid*

41 Tym and Partners (2012) *South Downs National Park Employment Land Review*, South Downs National Park Authority

**Figure 5.3** Breakdown of employment by industry by percentage



Source: Defra (2010) *South Downs National Park Economic Profile – ‘Inter-Departmental Business Register 2008’*, Defra

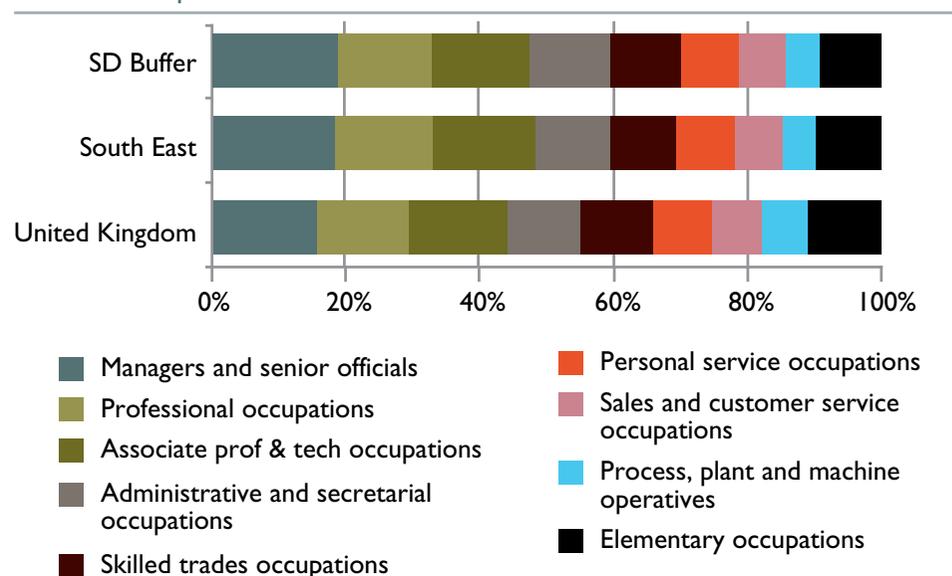
### Resident workforce

The National Park is an affluent area with a well educated population that earn above average incomes. Although data is only available at district level it suggests:

- that the National Park has a higher proportion of residents with NVQ4+ than either the regional or national average;

- average annual gross household incomes within the National Park are also slightly higher than those for the south east (£39,700 compared with £39,230);<sup>42</sup>
- out of the 12 districts that cross the National Park boundary, Wealden, East Hampshire, Horsham and Winchester residents' earnings are significantly higher than overall earnings for work places;<sup>43</sup>
- a high proportion of residents, particularly those of more rural areas are in managerial or professional occupations (Figure 5.4).

**Figure 5.4** Working age residents in employment by major occupation group, Oct 2009–Sept 2010



Source: Hampshire County Council Annual Population Survey (2011) *South Downs National Park Local Economy*, Hampshire County Council

42 CACI Paycheck data (2009) *South Downs National Park Local Economy*, Hampshire County Council September 2011

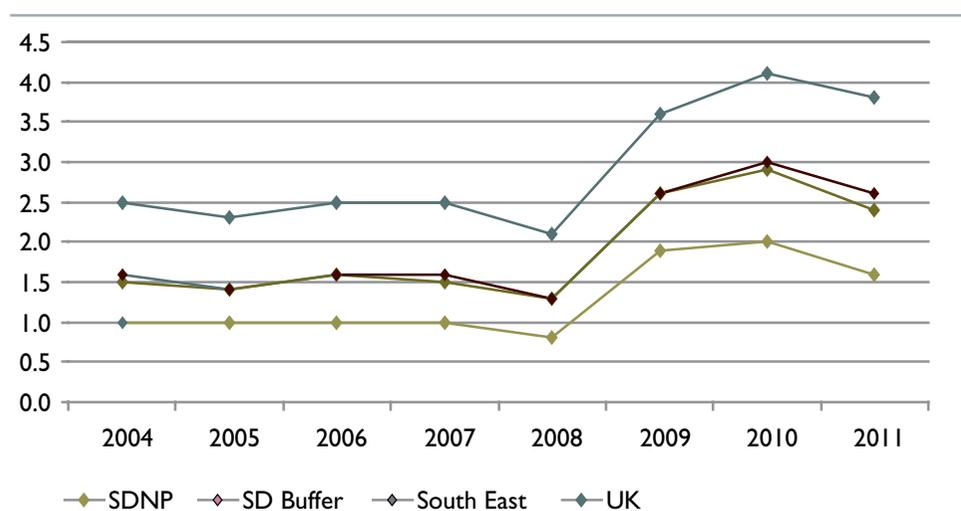
43 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, District level (2010), *South Downs National Park Local Economy*, Hampshire County Council 2011

Many of the high earners commute out of the National Park to London and other major urban areas in the south east (see the Transport Fact File for more travel-to-work patterns). They do, however, spend on local services which deliver 'quality of life' such as independent shops and local food and drink. Many lower paid workers who cannot afford to live in the National Park (see Chapter 8 for information on house prices) tend to commute into jobs in manufacturing, construction, public administration and education.

## Unemployment

In February 2011, unemployment rates in the National Park were about half the national rate and a full percentage point below the south east. The National Park has well below regional and national levels of people claiming unemployment benefit (Figure 5.5).

**Figure 5.5** Job Seekers Allowance claimant rate trends (%), Feb 2004–Feb 2011



Source: Hampshire County Council DWP Claimant Counts, Ward level (2011) *South Downs National Park Local Economy*, Hampshire County Council

There are notable peaks in the numbers of vacancies in October and troughs in January, with smaller peaks and troughs in demand in the summer months, which probably reflects the number of businesses dependent on seasonal workers such as tourism.<sup>44</sup>

## Broadband connectivity and speeds

At a time when businesses are carrying out more of their activities online and local authorities and other organisations are moving towards self-service delivery over the internet, reliable fast internet connections are essential to take full advantage of the opportunities presented by the online marketplace. As Map 5.2 shows, however, most of the rural areas throughout the National Park have either very low broadband speeds or none at all. Eighty per cent of the National Park has broadband speeds of less than 1 megabit (Mbit) per second. In fact, there are very few places (0.1 per cent) within the National Park that can get faster broadband i.e. speeds higher than 8 Mbit per second. The result of this is that many businesses, particularly in the rural areas, are severely disadvantaged by slow and unreliable internet connections.

In more than 90 per cent of the National Park area, broadband take up is less than 53 per cent of households and only Petersfield town centre has more than 75 per cent of households with broadband.



**For percentage take up of broadband by household.**

West Sussex has many 'not-spots' (i.e. locations that are out of range of coverage or with very poor connection speeds). It also has three of the last four remaining non-broadband enabled exchanges in England – Sutton, East Marden and Plaistow, all of which are in rural areas. Data on broadband connectivity is being confirmed for the rest of the National Park.

<sup>44</sup> 'NOMIS Jobcentre Plus Notified Vacancies (standardised to 4 1/3 week flows), Ward level' in Hampshire County Council (2011) *South Downs National Park Local Economy*, Hampshire County Council

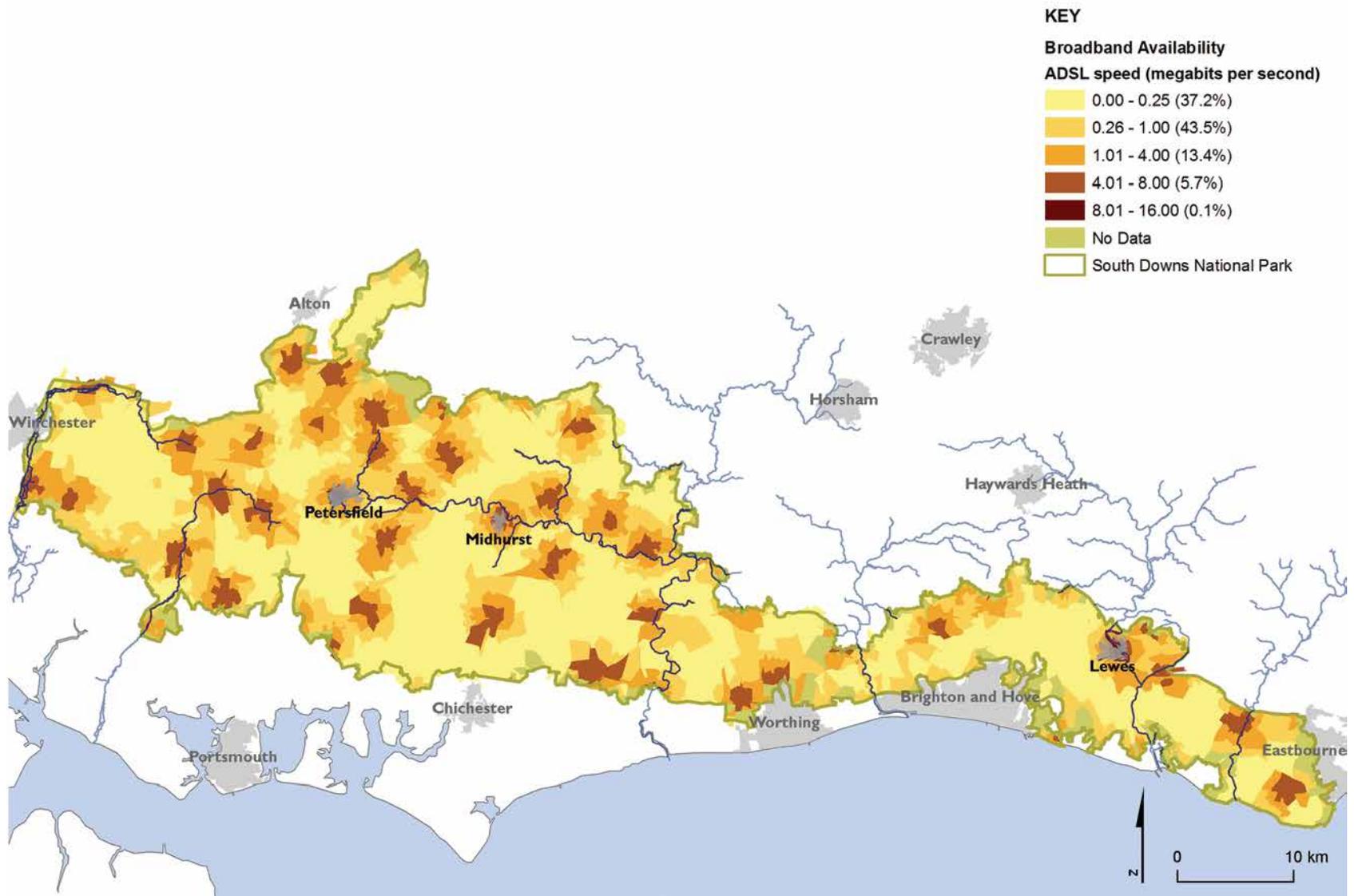
## Map 5.2

Broadband availability  
and speed

Maps prepared by:  
GeoSpec, University of  
Brighton; April 2012.

Source: Point Topic Ltd,  
2012

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## Farming

Farming<sup>45</sup> and land management have shaped the South Downs over the centuries and help sustain many of the special qualities for which the National Park was designated – its distinctive landscapes, diverse habitats and species, archaeological features and local produce. Land managers are key to maintaining the special qualities of the National Park. Farming is also crucial to ecosystems services not only through its products, but also through regulating services (air quality, flood protection) and supporting services (soil formation, nutrient recycling) (see Chapter 1). Climate change and global markets are likely to have a major impact on the farming and land management of the National Park in the future. While farming is very important to the landscape, its contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) of the area is likely to be small. In 2007, the farming sector in the UK accounted for £5.5 billion gross value added, equivalent to about 0.5 per cent of total UK GDP (National Statistics 2009), a fall of 10.5 per cent since 1900 (National Statistics, 2003).



Ploughing on the South Downs © Nick Heasman/SDNPA

45 Here, farming is taken to include horticulture, viticulture, commercial orchards and tree nurseries



### Key facts: Farming

There are 928 registered commercial holdings within the SDNP<sup>46</sup> (2010):

- The split between owned and rented is 60:40.
- 64 per cent of holdings are less than 100ha.
- 5 large private estates in West Sussex own 13.9 per cent (22,217ha) of the National Park area.
- 11.7 per cent (19,313ha) is owned or managed by public bodies and NGOs such as the Forestry Commission, National Trust, Brighton and Hove City Council and Eastbourne Borough Council.<sup>47</sup>
- Arable crops cover 44 per cent of agricultural land.
- 37 per cent of agricultural land is in permanent pasture land.
- The remaining 19 per cent is made up of temporary grassland, rough grazing, woodland and other land. There are several major commercial growing enterprises including tree and plant nurseries and two commercial orchards, as well as 16 vineyards.
- Livestock:
  - 126,333 sheep, of which 67,948 were lambs under one year old.
  - 46,356 cattle, of which 9397 were dairy cows, 7130 were beef suckler cows, 11,577 calves under one year old and 18,252 other cattle.
  - 17,080 pigs.
  - 1,197,424 poultry.

Source: Defra (2012) 2010 June Agricultural Survey, Defra

46 Commercial holdings are those with significant levels of farming activity, i.e. any holding over 5ha of agricultural land, 0.5ha of vegetables, or 0.1ha of protected crops, or more than 10 cows, 50 pigs, 20 sheep, 20 goats or 1000 poultry. Some farm businesses may have more than one holding

47 Just under 1500ha of land managed by public bodies and NGOs is leased from one of the large estates and therefore also included in the 13.9 per cent figure.

## Land use

Around 85 per cent of land within the National Park is classified as agricultural (including some woodland) (see Map 5.3).<sup>48</sup> Agricultural land is classified by grade according to the extent to which its physical or chemical characteristics impose long-term limitations on agricultural use for food production:

- The majority of agricultural land within the National Park is either grade 3 (72 per cent) or grade 4 (22 per cent).
- Less than 5 per cent is Grade 1 or 2 agricultural land i.e. the best and most versatile land.

**Grade 1** is excellent quality agricultural land on which a wide variety of agricultural and horticultural crops can be grown and commonly includes top fruit, soft fruit, salad crops and winter harvested vegetables. Yields are high and less variable than on land of lower quality.

**Grade 2** is very good quality agricultural land where minor limitations affect crop yield, cultivations or harvesting. The level of yield is generally high but may be lower or more variable than grade 1.

**Grade 3** is classed as good to moderate quality agricultural land with moderate limitations which affect the choice of crops, timing and type of cultivation, harvesting or the level of yield. Where more demanding crops are grown yields are generally lower or more variable than on land in Grades 1 and 2.

**Grade 4** is classed as poor quality agricultural land where severe limitations restrict the range of crops and/or level of yields. It is mainly suited to grass with occasional arable crops (e.g. cereals and forage crops) the yields of which are variable.

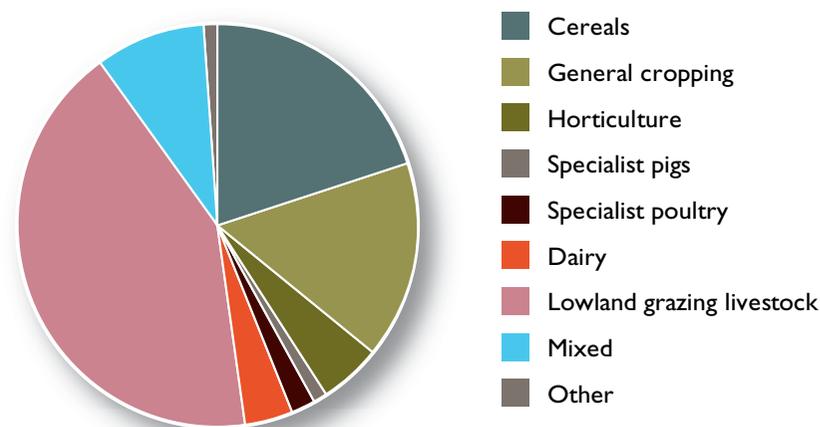
## Crops

The proportion of grassland to arable has varied throughout history. Since World War II, however, there has been a fundamental shift in British agricultural policy as well as substantial technological improvements and changes in agricultural practice. The permanent chalk grassland area has significantly

48 Defra (2009) *Agricultural Land Classification*, Defra

reduced while the percentage area of crops and fallow has increased from 24 per cent in 1940<sup>49</sup> to 44 per cent in 2010 (Figure 5.7).<sup>50</sup> Exact acreages of different crops grown within the National Park are not available and will vary on an annual basis, depending on rotations, commodity prices etc. but general trends can be picked out from the Defra June 2010 Agricultural Census data report. Sixty-four per cent of the cropped area is down to cereals, mainly winter wheat, but also spring barley and oats, used for animal feed and human consumption. Other arable crops – mainly oil seed rape – account for a further 30 per cent of the cropped area, along with other crops such as brassicas, field beans, peas and maize. Oil seed rape and maize are relative newcomers. The majority of these products are sold on the national and international markets.

Figure 5.6 Number of farms by type in the National Park



Source: Defra (2012) *2010 June Agricultural Survey*, Defra

49 Smart and Brandon (2007) *The Future of the South Downs*, Packard Publishing

50 Defra (2012) *June 2010 Agricultural Survey Data for South Downs National Park*, Defra

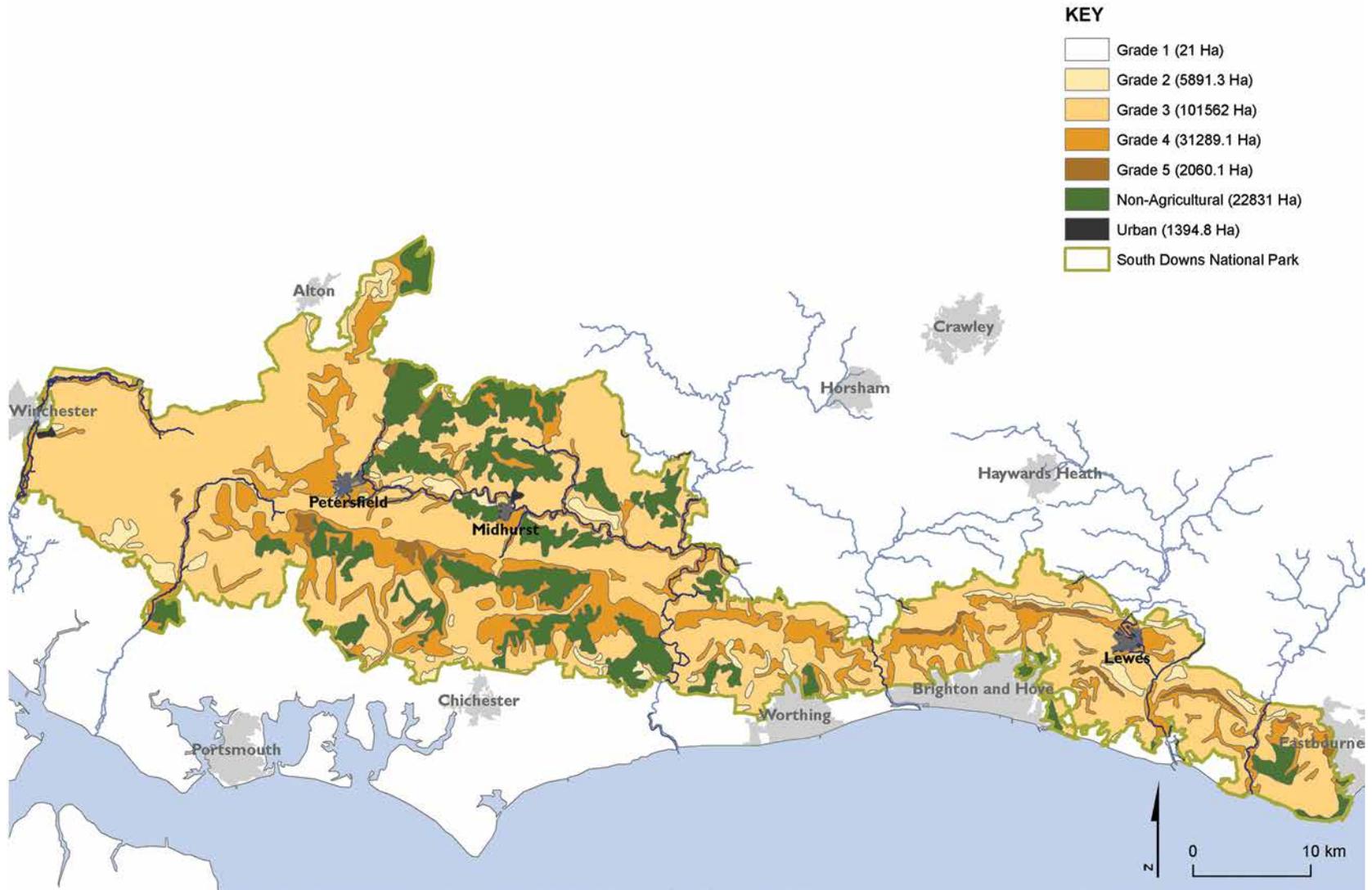
### Map 5.3

#### Agricultural land classification

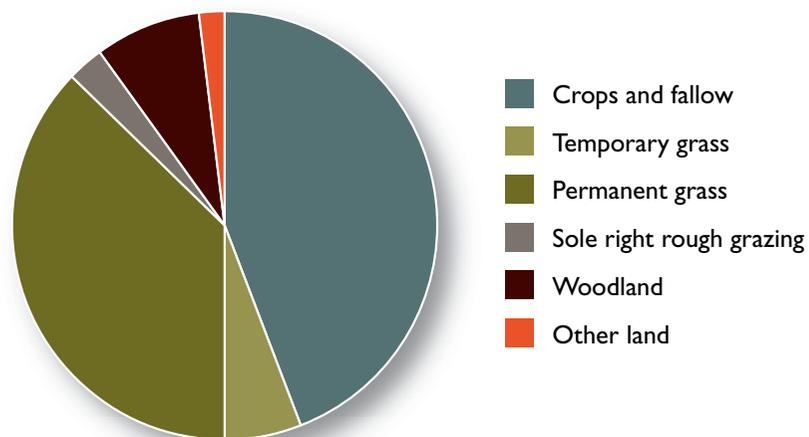
Maps prepared by:  
GeoSpec, University of  
Brighton; February 2012.

Source: Defra, 2009

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**Figure 5.7** Agricultural land use by area (ha)



\*NB this only includes woodland registered in the June Agricultural Survey.

Source: Defra (2012) *Agricultural and Horticultural Survey 2010*, Defra

### Livestock

- Overall numbers of cattle have changed little since 2009 although the numbers of dairy cows and calves under one year old have fallen, these have been replaced by an increase in other cattle.
- There has been an increase of over 10,000 in the number of pigs.
- While breeding ewes have increased only slightly since 2009 (155) there appears to have been a larger increase in lambs (2177) under one year old.

### Agricultural infrastructure

There are no abattoirs within the National Park but there are 12 within 50 kilometres of the boundary, including Laverstoke and Farnborough in Hampshire, Guildford in Surrey, and Heathfield and Henfield in Sussex. The

main livestock markets for the region are at Hailsham, Salisbury and Ashford. Hailsham is the closest of these, 5 kilometres or so from the eastern boundary of the National Park, whilst Salisbury is about 20 kilometres from the western end of the National Park.

### Employment levels in agriculture

In 2010, agriculture employed in the region of 2921 people in the National Park, an increase of 282 from the 2009 June Survey figures.<sup>51</sup> The majority of the increase was in the number of part-time farmers (see Table 5.1 for a breakdown). Mechanisation has caused the number of farm workers to fall dramatically since the 1950s when it is estimated that over 20,000 people were employed in agriculture.

**Table 5.1** Breakdown of labour in agriculture

	2010
Farmers full time	613
Farmers part time	818
Salaried managers full time	135
Salaried managers part time	56
Employees full time	603
Employees part time	396
Casual workers	300
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,921</b>

Source: Defra (2012) *2010 June Agricultural Survey*, Defra

51 Defra (2012) *Agricultural and Horticultural Survey 2009 and 2010*, Defra

## Income levels in agricultural sector

Regionally, the average farm business incomes for 2010/11 varied from £24,176 for grazing livestock to £99,913 for cereals.<sup>52</sup> This reflects higher prices for cereals and oilseed rape compared to the previous year, while average incomes fell by 19 per cent in the livestock sector. Farm income figures for the National Park are not available. The Single Payment Scheme (SPS) makes an important contribution to average farm incomes for many farm types.<sup>53</sup>

## The Single Payment Scheme

The Single Payment Scheme (SPS) provides a set payment of around €250 per hectare (2011 figure) for eligible land that is kept in good agricultural and environmental condition. The Rural Payments Agency is unable to provide information on the current area of land registered and the amount of Single Payment coming into the National Park, however it was estimated in 2000 that the government was spending over £21.5 million per annum on crops and livestock.<sup>54</sup>

## Diversification

Around 75 per cent of holdings in the south east (including London) have diversified into other activities.<sup>55</sup> In 2010, the NFU estimated that around half of the farms in the National Park had diversified.<sup>56</sup> The type of diversification enterprise varies widely from horse livery to business units, fishing lakes, camping, storage and wedding/conference venues.

52 Farm business income is essentially the same as net profit, which, as a standard financial accounting measure of income, is used widely within and outside agriculture

53 Defra (2011) *Farm Accounts in England – Results from the Farm Business Survey 2010/11*, Defra (based on income from agricultural production, agri-environment, diversification and the single payment)

54 Smart and Brandon (2007) *The Future of the South Downs*, Packard Publishing

55 Defra diversification data in Hampshire County Council and Hampshire Economic Partnership (2010) *Hampshire Farming Study Review 2010*, Defra

56 NFU (2010) *Why Farming Matters to the South Downs*, NFU

## Case Study Mike Tristram



Mike Tristram is Managing Trustee of the Sompting Estate, which includes c.1400 acres of land in West Sussex within the South Downs National Park.

“The Single Payment Scheme (SPS) is a relatively stable factor in farmers’ annual income which helps to keep them in business. Continuity in farm occupancy is important for supporting knowledge, relationships, conservation and productivity.

Local weather conditions and fluctuating market prices affect farm profits so the stability provided by SPS is really important. The Sompting Estate’s tenant farmers have diversified on a small scale through activities such as horse livery. In our sensitive landscape, however, the opportunity to stabilise incomes through diversification is limited, so our farmers’ core business of mixed livestock and arable farming has to be profitable, which SPS helps with. Our two farms within the National Park are in the environmental stewardship Higher Level Scheme (HLS) which complements SPS, helping with the extra cost of wildlife-friendly farming.

Landowners like the Sompting Estate, in partnership with our tenants, make an essential contribution to the rural economy and food security. We reinvest rental income in repairs, developing infrastructure, conservation, woodlands, water, traditional buildings, and occasional small-scale diversification into commercial lets, although the payback on the cost of improvements to traditional buildings is typically very long. Some of our old farm buildings were too costly to convert and have been saved by an Historic Buildings grant from the HLS. Grants such as these can help us achieve both our own and the National Park’s conservation objectives.”

### Box 5.1 One aspect of diversification – vineyard

One impact of climate change has been the increase in vineyards. Over the last 20 years, there has been an increase in the number and size of commercial vineyards and wineries across the south east, to approximately 80, of which an estimated 16 are within the National Park, covering approximately 120ha (growing to over 200ha in the next year or so). The soils and weather patterns on the south facing slopes of the chalk downland are ideal for grape production, and wine production is a viable diversification route for some farmers and land managers. Most grapes are made into still and sparkling white wine but red and rosé are also produced. A further 5 vineyards are very close to the boundary of the National Park.

### Agri-environment schemes

Agri-environment schemes fund farmers and land managers to deliver effective environmental management on their land (Table 5.2), which help to maintain the special qualities of the National Park. Environmental Stewardship builds on earlier initiatives such as the Countryside Stewardship and Environmentally Sensitive Areas schemes (Map 5.4). Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) is the first of these schemes for which all farmers are eligible if they carry out enough environmentally beneficial management measures. The National Park is also a target area for Higher Level Scheme (HLS) funding aimed at providing specific environmental benefits such as measures to increase farmland bird numbers. Map 5.5 shows the distribution of Environmental Stewardship agreements.

### Key facts: Agri-environment schemes

- 57 per cent of the National Park (93,561 ha) is covered by agri-environment schemes – 66 per cent of all agricultural land.
- Spending on all agri-environment schemes nearly doubled between 2005/06 and 2009/10 from £4.567 to £8.305 million.

Source: Natural England (2011) *Agri-environment Scheme Uptake for the South Downs National Park*, Natural England

**Table 5.2** Area and income from Environmental Stewardship schemes in the National Park (excluding Environmentally Sensitive Areas [ESA] and Countryside Stewardship Schemes [CSS])

	Entry Level Stewardship	Entry Level Plus Higher Level	Higher Level Stewardship	Organic Entry level	Organic Entry level plus higher Level	Total
<b>Area in Ha</b>	27,847	41,062	4,022	3,033	4,888	80,852
<b>Cost £</b>	£409,153	£4,238,200	£628,522	£101,616	£837,658	£6,215,149

Source: Natural England (2011) *GIAS Report*, Natural England



Sam and Zoe farming on the South Downs, Exceat © Anne Purkiss

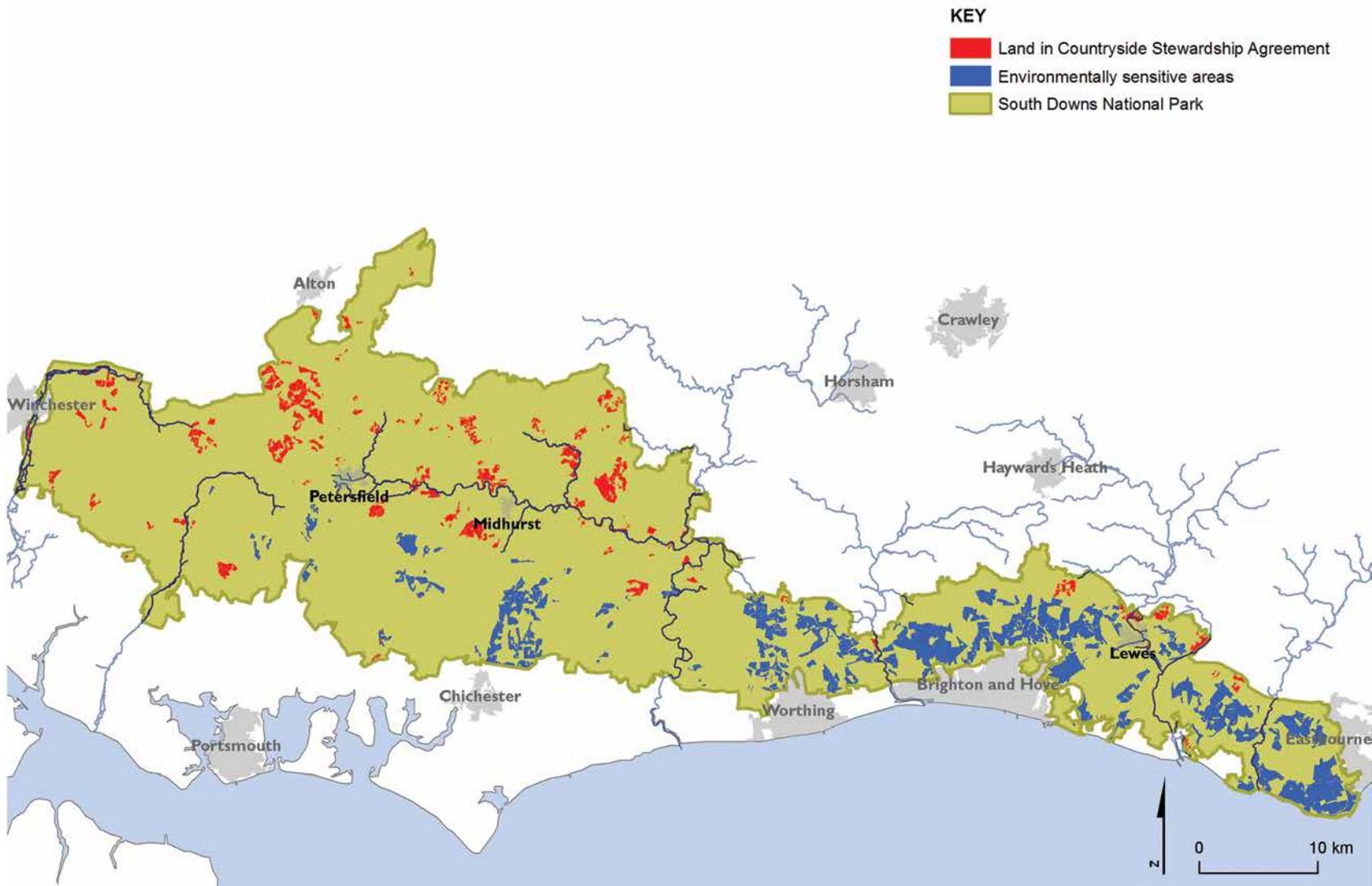
## Map 5.4

Countryside  
Stewardship and  
Environmentally  
Sensitive Area  
Schemes

Maps prepared by:  
GeoSpec, University of  
Brighton; May 2012.

Source: Natural England,  
2011

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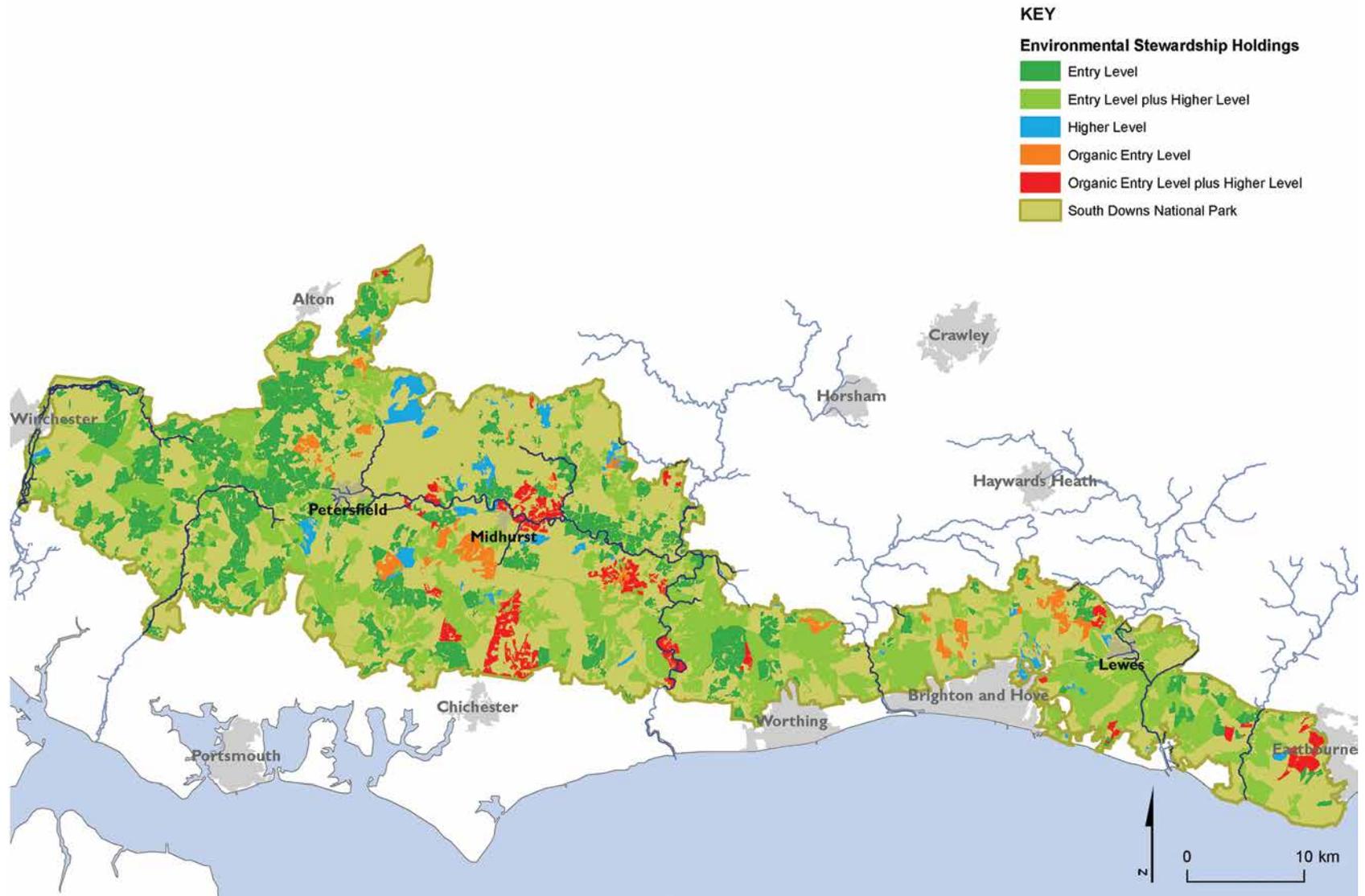
## Map 5.5

Environmental  
Stewardship Higher  
Level and Organic  
Level

Maps prepared by:  
GeoSpec, University of  
Brighton; April 2012

Source: Natural England,  
2011

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## Forestry

Like much of the south east, some parts of the National Park are heavily wooded. The widespread mix of deciduous and coniferous woodland covers 23.8 per cent and is a distinctive feature of the western half of the National Park. Of this, 17,351 ha is ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW) and just under one-quarter is planted ancient woodland sites (PAWS).

### Key facts: Forestry

- Total area of woodland 38,420ha (23.8 per cent of the National Park area).
- Roughly 50 per cent of woodland in the National Park is ancient semi-natural woodland.
- 4.6 per cent of woodland is coppice.
- Over half of all coppice is under 2ha.
- The Forestry Commission (FC) manage 14 per cent (5526ha) of woodland.
- 7 major landowners (including the FC) own 56 per cent of the woodland.



Figures on the income from forestry are not currently available but it is estimated that if all of the 38,420ha of woodland were actively managed this could potentially contribute some £22.8m to the local economy.

### Key facts: Woodfuel potential

- Forestry Commission estimate that 34,000ha could be available within the National Park area for the production of woodfuel:
  - This could produce 60,000m<sup>3</sup> of wood per year.
  - An equivalent of 140,000,000kWhrs.
  - Enough to heat 9000 homes.
- In oil equivalent terms (at 60p per litre) the energy embedded in the woodfuel has a value of more than £8 million/year.
- There are at least 11 significant sized woodfuel boilers installed with more planned. These add up to in excess of 2000kW and use around 2000m<sup>3</sup> per year.

Source: Forestry Commission (April 2012) *Opportunities for the Woods of South East England*, Forestry Commission

### Key facts: UK timber utilisation

- Construction industry remains the largest market for sawn and planed softwood at 62 per cent.
- Sawn softwood volumes have generally declined especially the volumes used in the construction industry since the onset of recession in 2008.
- Other important markets are the pallets and packaging industry, and the fencing and outdoor markets which have also declined but to a lesser extent than the construction industry.
- In 2010, domestically produced consumption grew by an estimated 8 per cent and was projected to grow further in 2011, raising the share of sawn softwood consumed in the UK to 41 per cent. The construction industry use the lowest share of UK produced sawn softwoods (21 per cent) and the fencing and outdoor uses the highest (89 per cent).

Source: Moore, Nicholas (March 2012) *Timber Utilisation Statistics 2010 & 2011 Estimates – An Updated Study for the Forestry Commission*, Forestry Commission

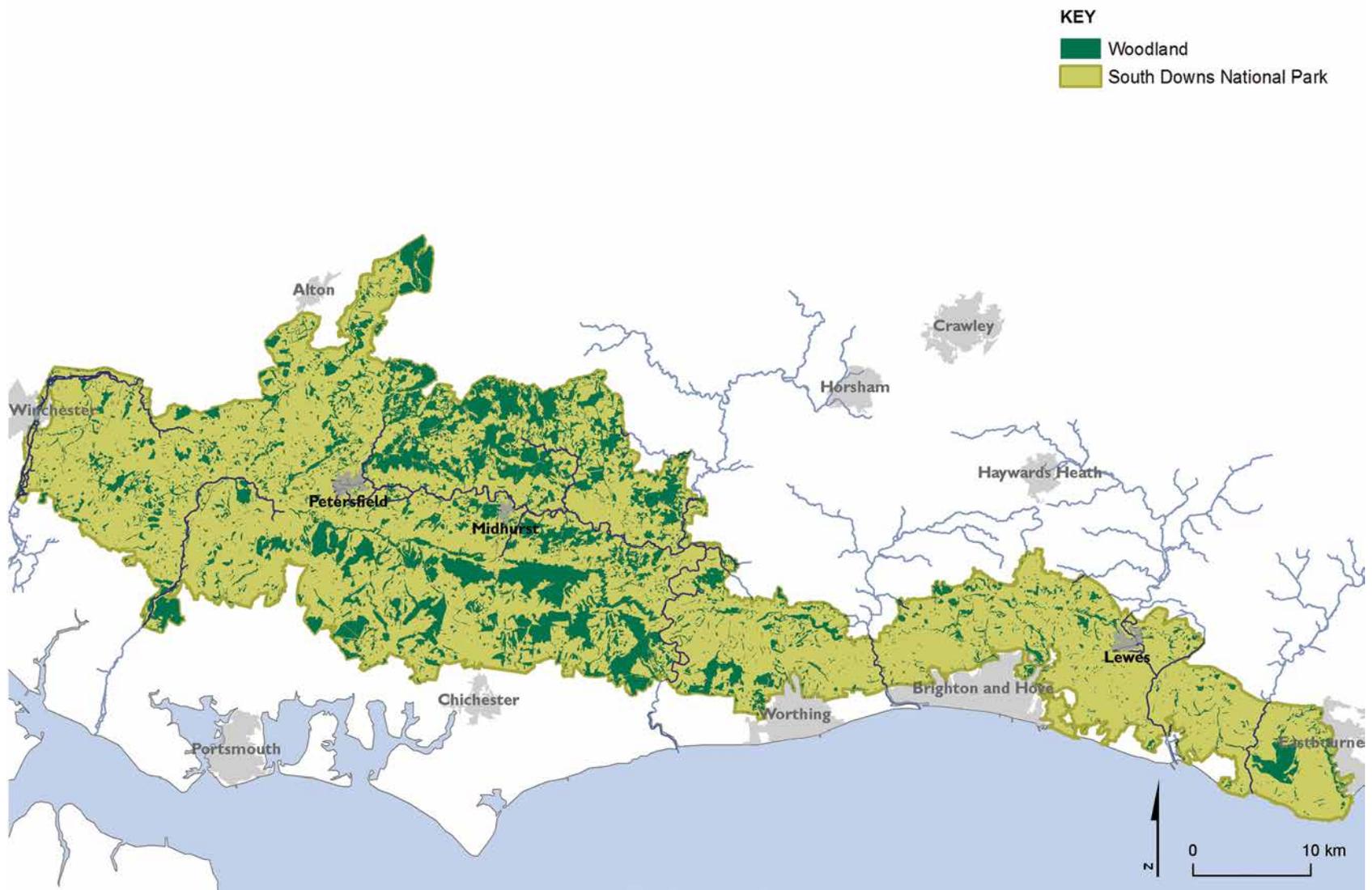
## Map 5.6

Woodland  
distribution across  
the South Downs  
National Park

Maps prepared by:  
GeoSpec, University of  
Brighton; April 2012.

Source: National Forest  
Inventory, Forestry  
Commission, 2010

Ordnance Survey Crown  
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100050083.



## Tourism and the visitor economy

The National Park is a popular visitor destination, with people drawn to the area by its outstanding landscapes, cultural heritage, wildlife and opportunities for recreation. Tourism brings significant money into the area and supports a higher proportion of jobs than the surrounding area in tourism related industries. The majority of visitors are from the surrounding areas.

### Case Study Flair Kitching



Flair Kitching is Assistant Manager of Gilbert White's House & Garden and The Oates Collection, located in the Hampshire village of Selborne. The museum celebrates three explorers of the natural world and attracts some 30,000 visitors each year, including those enjoying the education and lifelong learning activities hosted at the Gilbert White Field Studies Centre.

"One of the top challenges for us is to effectively market our somewhat hidden heritage gem – so partnership working is key to our continuing success. Whilst we have always worked with other local attractions, the creation of the South Downs National Park has presented new opportunities to do this. For example we are working closely with Petersfield Museum, Jane Austen's House Museum and Chawton House Library to create a joint brand to attract visitors to our corner of the National Park.

We are optimistic that as the South Downs National Park becomes increasingly recognised we, as an independent charitable trust, alongside the local economy, will further flourish. We are delighted to work with colleagues to steadily increase visitor numbers to an area that has perhaps not previously featured as a top tourist destination, but offers much beauty and variety – not to mention delicious cream teas!"

### Key facts: Tourism

- There are an estimated 39 million day visits to the National Park each year (2003/04).<sup>57</sup>
- Of which, an estimated 4.34 million day trips within the National Park are by residents of the area (see Chapter 6 for more detail).
- Only 1.2 million days of their holidays were spent by tourists staying in the National Park.
- The average length of stay for visitors is 5 nights.
- The most popular places to stay were Alfriston (13 per cent) and Lewes (11 per cent).
- 6.8 million day trips were made by tourists staying outside the National Park.
- 26.7 million day trips were made into the National Park from homes outside the area.

### Visitor stay and spend

Visitors staying in accommodation within the area were dispersed across a wide variety of towns and villages. Many more visitors to the area stay in accommodation outside of the boundary.

The total value of these visits to the region was around £333 million. However, the visitor spend within the National Park was estimated at only £177.7 million:<sup>58</sup>

- 63 per cent of spend was from day visitors from home (average spend of £8.29 per person);
- 18 per cent of spend was from day visitors into the National Park but staying in holiday accommodation outside the area; and
- 18 per cent of spend was from staying visitors (average spend of £11.28 per person, £27.68 including overnight accommodation).

57 Tourism South East and Geoff Broom Associates (2004) *Visitor Survey of the Proposed South Downs National Park 2003–2004*, Countryside Agency

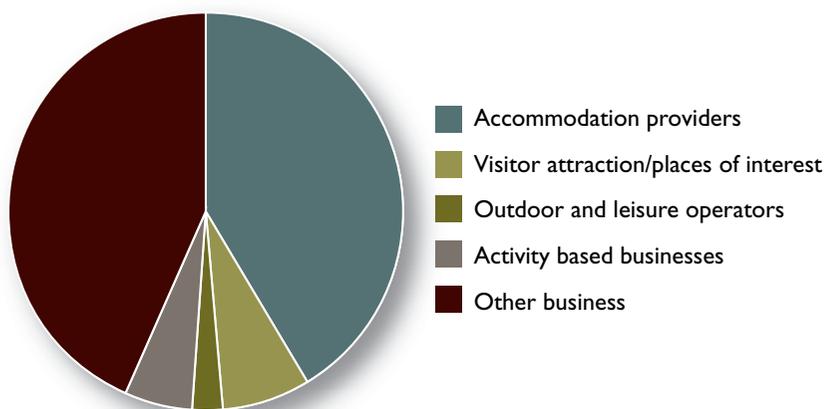
58 *Ibid*

Catering and retail had the highest proportion of spend at 31 per cent and 26 per cent respectively while accommodation was the lowest at 13 per cent. Although day visitors from home spend less these are currently of greater value because there are far more such day trips by local people.

### Tourism businesses

There are 803 tourism businesses within the South Downs National Park.<sup>59</sup>

Figure 5.8 Breakdown of tourism businesses



The 2004 Survey estimated that the total number of jobs supported in the tourism industry in the National Park was 7218, although a high proportion of these are seasonal or part-time. This figure equates to a full-time equivalent of 4137.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that during high profile events such as Goodwood Festival of Speed there is very little spare accommodation for some distance.

<sup>59</sup> Tourism South East (2012) *Progress Report on Visitor/Residents and Business Survey for the South Downs National Park Authority*

However, data gathered so far in the new business survey does not suggest a shortage of serviced accommodation, although the survey sample size was disappointingly low. Occupancy levels for serviced accommodation were 43 per cent while for self catering they were higher at 61 per cent. Although the number of camping and caravan sites has increased slightly (see Table 5.3) there is generally a lack of low cost accommodation, particularly along the South Downs Way.<sup>60</sup>

A new visitor survey is being carried out to provide more up-to-date visitor figures. The previous survey was based on the proposed National Park area rather than the final boundary, so figures will not be directly comparable. However, it should be possible to pick out some trends.

The new visitor survey will give us a range of data such as visitor numbers, spend, length of stay, impact on the environment, residents' attitudes and information about the number of businesses that are supported and their views on sustainability.



Weald and Downland Museum, Singleton © SDNPA

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*

**Table 5.3** Breakdown by accommodation type

Visitor Accommodation	Number		Bed spaces
	2004	2011	2011
Bed and Breakfast and guest accommodation	161	197	1171
Hotel accommodation	35	31	2305
Caravan and camping sites	11	15	3952
Self-catering accommodation	77	85	458
Youth hostels	5	4	169
All visitor accommodation	289	332	8055

Sources: Tourism South East (2012) *Progress Report on Visitor/Residents and Business Survey for the South Downs National Park Authority*; Tourism South East (2004) *Visitor Survey of the Proposed South Downs National Park 2003–2004*, Countryside Agency

## Local produce

Food and drink are growing industries within the National Park. In addition to the 16 vineyards there are also 12 breweries and one cider maker. The products of these and seasonal produce such as apples, pears and plums are sold in a number of farm shops and community shops. As well as the sale of primary products such as milk, meat, eggs fruit and vegetables, a wide variety of products is also processed or manufactured such as ice cream and cheese, as well as breads and cakes, jams and chutneys.

There are numerous pubs and restaurants providing a valuable service for visitors and residents alike, many of which support local producers by serving local produce and providing a real sense of place.

Farmers' markets also take place once a month in Petersfield, Midhurst, Petworth, Slindon, Lewes and Firle, as well as in towns and cities around the edge of the National Park such as Steyning, Arundel, Brighton and Hove, Shoreham, Winchester and Alton. A report by Action in Rural Sussex in 2004 found that Sussex Farmers' Markets are of great economic importance to

local food businesses.<sup>61</sup> An evaluation of the Hampshire Food Festival in 2011 recorded that 221,015 visitors attended 93 events across the county and resulted in an estimated £3.82 million visitor spend.<sup>62</sup> Specific numbers of food and drink processing businesses and their value to the National Park economy are unavailable.



**We need data on the number and range of food and drink processing businesses, and their value to the local economy.**



Lewes Farmers' market © [www.commoncause.org.uk](http://www.commoncause.org.uk)

61 Julie Withers and Anne-Marie Bur/Action in Rural Sussex (2004) *Sussex Farmers' Markets Research*, Action in Rural Sussex

62 Hampshire Fare (2011) *Hampshire Food Festival 2011 Evaluation Report Summary*, Hampshire Fare

## Minerals

The National Park has a wealth of mineral resources that are important to the economy. The minerals are used for a wide range of applications related to construction, manufacturing, agriculture and energy supply.

The 'Folkestone Bed' formation is a major source of soft sand (which is mainly used as an aggregate) which runs from the Petersfield area in the west to Ditchling in the east (see Map 2.2 Solid Geology). Sand is currently being extracted from the following sites:

- Stanton's Farm Quarry, Novington;
- Heath End Quarry, Duncton;
- Minsted Sandpit, Stedham; and
- West Heath Quarry, West Harting.

Gravel and some sharp sand is found along the southern boundary of the South Downs, overlying the chalk to the north of a line approximating to the route of the A27. There is currently one active gravel site at Valdoe Quarry, Goodwood. There are also several former gravel workings within and close to the National Park boundary.

 **For a map of drift geology and superficial deposits which shows deposits of clay, sand and gravel.**

Local clay is vital to enable local brickworks to produce distinctive bricks which contribute to the character of settlements. Clay is extracted for brick making at the Pitsham Brickworks in Cocking.

Chalk has been worked in the South Downs for many centuries and used for a variety of purposes including agricultural lime, bulk fill in road construction and cement production linked to Shoreham Cement Works when it was in operation. Demand for chalk is now limited and there are a number of dormant and inactive sites within the National Park. The sites currently operating are:

- Duncton Chalk Quarry, Duncton; and
- Newtimber Chalk Works, Pyecombe.

Sandstone within the National Park is found within the Hythe beds of the Lower Greensand. Current workings are at Bognor Common Stone Quarry near Fittleworth – where it is crushed on site and used as aggregate for local paths, hardcore and constructional fill, as well as rockery and ornamental stone. Winter's Pit in Easebourne is also active and produces building stone. A continuing supply of local building stone is important for new building and for restoration to maintain local vernacular architecture.

Oil and gas reserves are trapped in faults and folds confined to the Corallian Beds and the lower Oolites of the Jurassic period. Oil and gas development is controlled by the Government through the granting of licenses to search, bore for and extract hydrocarbons. Planning permission is required for each stage of site development – exploration, appraisal and production. There are five oil and gas sites such as at Singleton and Rowland's Castle – some are in production and some are at the exploration and appraisal stages.



*Sandpit, Stedham Common © SDNPA*

 **For information about waste sites and services.**

# Key data: An environment shaped by centuries of farming and embracing new enterprise



## South Downs economy

The National Park Authority, with its partners, will monitor changes in the National Park's economy:

- **Key data:**
  - GVA<sup>63</sup> per head;
  - Number of businesses;
  - Number of jobs;
  - Unemployment levels;
  - Numbers of in and out commuters;
  - Broadband connectivity and speed.
- **Current position:**
  - GVA £19,450 per head;
  - Number of businesses: 8500–11,500 (estimated);
  - Number of jobs: 52,500–83,800;
  - Unemployment levels: 1.6 per cent;
  - Numbers of in commuters: 24,700; Number of out commuters 22,400;
  - Broadband connectivity and speed: 80.7 per cent with speeds of less than 1 megabit per second.
- **Data source:** Hampshire County Council (2011) *South Downs National Park Local Economy*, Hampshire County Council; Defra (2010) *South Downs National Park Economic Profile*, Defra; Point Topic (Jan 2011) *Broadband availability and speed data*, Point Topic
- **Responsibility for data collection:** Office for National Statistics.

63 GVA measures the contribution to the economy of each individual producer, industry or sector in the United Kingdom – the value that has been added during the process of production of goods and services

## Farming

The National Park Authority, with its partners, will monitor changes in farming within the National Park:

- **Key data:**
  - Total number of commercial land holdings;
  - Average farm size and type;
  - Total numbers of and types of livestock;
  - Areas of crop types.
- **Current position:**
  - Number of commercial land holdings: 928;
  - Average farm size: 66ha;
  - Numbers of livestock: Sheep – 126,333; cattle – 46,356; pigs – 17,080;
  - Areas of crop types: Cereals – 31,471ha; other arable crops – 14,678ha; horticulture – 700ha; permanent grass – 41,284ha; rough grazing – 3449ha.
- **Data source:** Defra (2009) *Land Use Classification*, Defra; Defra (2012) *Agricultural and Horticultural Survey*, Defra
- **Responsibility for data collection:** Defra

## Agri-environment Schemes

The National Park Authority, with its partners, will monitor changes in how much land is managed through agri-environment schemes:

- **Key data:** The area of land, in hectares, in the National Park managed through existing or future agri-environment schemes, and this area as a percentage of the total area of the National Park.
- **Current position:** A total of 93,561ha of land, or 57 per cent, of the National Park (66 per cent of agricultural land) is managed through agri-environment schemes.
- **Data source:** Natural England (2011) *Agri-environment Scheme Uptake for the South Downs National Park*, Natural England

- **Responsibility for data collection:** Natural England.

## Forestry

The National Park Authority, with its partners, will monitor the area of woodland within the National Park and how much is managed through the England Woodland Grant Scheme:

- **Key data:**
  - Area of woodland cover in hectares;
  - Area of woodland under EWGS in hectares and as a percentage of the total woodland area;
  - Area with a recognised management plan or Forest Design Plan;
  - Area of Ancient Woodland under EWGS and as a percentage of the Ancient Woodland Area.
- **Current position:**
  - 38,420ha of woodland;
  - Approximately 14,720ha (38 per cent) is managed under the Woodland Grant Scheme for England (EWGS);
  - Area under recognised management plan or Forest Design Plan not currently available;
  - Area of Ancient Woodland under EWGS 6754ha (40 per cent of EWGS area).
- **Data source:** Forestry Commission (2010) *National Forest Inventory*, Forestry Commission
- **Responsibility for data collection:** Forestry Commission.

## Tourism

The National Park Authority, with its partners, will monitor changes in tourism to the National Park:

- **Key data:**
  - The number of visits; percentage of day visits to staying visits;
  - Visitor spend;
  - Number and type of tourism businesses;
  - Number of businesses with 'Green' accreditation such as GTBS.

- **Current position:**

- 39 million visitor days spent in the National Park (34.72 million were visits by non-residents) of which 3.5 per cent were by tourists staying in the South Downs;
- Visitor spend: £1.77 million;
- There are 332 accommodation businesses, 52 attractions and 126 food and drink establishments;
- Number of businesses in the National Park currently accredited under GTBS 16; 10 Gold, 4 Silver, 1 Bronze and 1 awaiting grading.

- **Data source:** Tourism South East and Geoff Broom Associates (2004) *Visitor Survey of the proposed South Downs National Park 2003–2004*, Countryside Agency; Tourism South East (2012) *Progress Report on Visitor/Residents and Business Survey for the South Downs National Park Authority*, Tourism South East; Green Tourism Business Scheme (March 2012) *Progress Report*, Green Tourism Business Scheme

- **Responsibility for data collection:** South Downs National Park Authority.

## Minerals

The National Park Authority will monitor mineral extraction in the National Park:

- **Key data:** The number of extraction sites, area and tonnage.
- **Current position:** Working sites: Soft sand – 4, gravel and sharp sand – 1, clay – 1, chalk – 2, sandstone – 2, oil and gas – 5 (in production and exploration sites); Information on tonnage for individual sites is not available as this is economically sensitive data.
- **Data source:** Local Authorities (Annual) *Local Authority Annual Monitoring Reports*, Local Authorities
- **Responsibility for data collection:** South Downs National Park Authority as the Minerals Authority.



## Chapter 6

# GREAT OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES

The South Downs offers a wide range of recreational and learning opportunities to the large and diverse populations living both within and on the doorstep of the National Park, and to visitors from further afield.

With more than 3,300 kilometres (2,050 miles) of public rights of way and the entire South Downs Way National Trail within the National Park there is exceptional scope for walking, cycling and horse riding. Many other outdoor activities take place such as paragliding, orienteering and canoeing. There is a chance for everyone to walk, play, picnic and enjoy the countryside, including at Queen Elizabeth Country Park in Hampshire and Seven Sisters Country Park in East Sussex.

The variety of landscapes, wildlife and culture provides rich opportunities for learning about the South Downs as a special place for the many school and college students and lifelong learners. Museums, churches, historic houses, outdoor education centres and wildlife reserves are places that provide both enjoyment and learning. There is a strong volunteering tradition providing chances for outdoor conservation work, acquiring rural skills, leading guided walks and carrying out survey work relating to wildlife species and rights of way.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>64</sup> South Downs National Park Authority (2011) *Special Qualities of the South Downs National Park*, South Downs National Park Authority

There is a growing body of evidence demonstrating how access to nature and opportunities for outdoor activity can have an important impact on physical and mental health and well-being.<sup>65</sup> Benefits range from opportunities to increase physical activity through walking and taking part in sports, to the mental health benefits of green exercise (exercise taken outdoors in a natural or semi-natural environment), or simply being close to nature. In addition to health benefits for individuals, access to green spaces has wider social benefits: providing opportunities for social interaction and helping to create a sense of community.<sup>66</sup>

This chapter looks at opportunities for access, recreation and learning experiences, focusing on users and participation, and considering any barriers that prevent some people from experiencing and enjoying the National Park.

## Access on land

### Rights of way

The South Downs National Park has the longest rights of way network of all national parks in the UK, with more than 3,300km of footpaths, bridleways and byways. This network, including the 160km South Downs Way National Trail, is without a doubt the National Park's most significant recreational resource. It is the primary means by which people access and enjoy the National Park, providing opportunities for many recreational pursuits from gentle strolls to exhilarating rides. The key facts box details the footpaths, bridleways and byways that make up the rights of way network

65 Sustainable Development Commission (2008) *Health, Place and Nature: How Outdoor Environments Influence Health and Well-being – A Knowledge Base*, SDC

66 *Ibid*

### Key facts: Rights of way

Footpaths	1813km
Bridleways	1213km
Byways open to all traffic (BOATs)	77km
Restricted byways	229km
(Included in above figs. is the South Downs Way National Trail 160km)	



*The South Downs Way © Stewart Garside*

### Managing and maintaining rights of way

The four local highways authorities (LHAs)<sup>67</sup> are responsible for the management and maintenance of the public rights of way within the National Park. As people's ability to enjoy the area relies heavily on the quality and accessibility of the paths and trails, reliable and consistent data about the condition of the rights of way network across the National Park is vital. A recently agreed Joint Accord<sup>68</sup> between the National Park Authority and the

67 The LHAs are Brighton and Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council, Hampshire County Council and West Sussex County Council

68 Accord for the Management of the Rights of Way and Access in the South Downs National Park, 2012. The signatories to the Accord are: the National Park Authority, Brighton and Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council, Hampshire County Council and West Sussex County Council

LHAs sets out how we will work together to ensure that rights of way and access opportunities are of a consistently high quality and that information on the condition of rights of way is regularly updated and made available.

### Box 6.1 Rights of Way Improvement Plans

Rights of Way Improvement Plans produced by local highways authorities are aspirational plans identifying potential improvements to the rights of way and access network. We will work with the LHAs and the South Downs Local Access Forum to identify those improvements that will bring the most benefits to users.

### Box 6.2 South Downs Way National Trail

The South Downs Way National Trail is the most significant element in the rights of way network in the National Park. At 160km (100 miles), it is one of only 15 National Trails in England and Wales and, as a bridleway, is the only National Trail in Britain which is fully open to walkers, cyclists and horse riders for its entire length. The South Downs Way is also the only national trail entirely within a national park.

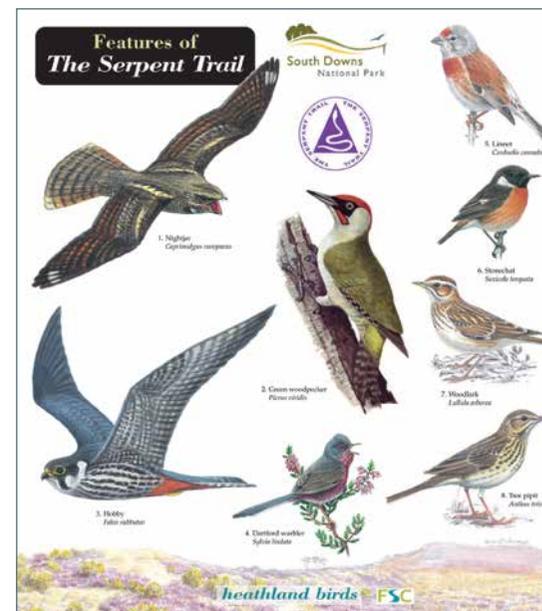
Two main groups use the trail: those walking or riding the entire length of the Trail and those using just part of the Trail for a shorter visit, usually combined with use of the wider rights of way network. Using data from people counters buried under the Trail and other visitor surveys, we estimate that around 20,000 people complete the whole length of the South Downs Way each year, while approximately 20 million visits are made to shorter parts of the Trail. Later in this chapter we discuss the impacts of the volume of people using the Trail and the different types of use.

National Trail Quality Standards exist to provide a framework for the management and maintenance of National Trails and to enhance people's enjoyment and experience. The Key Data box at the end of this chapter highlights 2 of the 24 standards against which the state of the South Downs Way can be measured.

## Other long distance trails and promoted routes

Access to the National Park is enhanced by a number of long distance trails, cycle routes, quiet lanes<sup>69</sup> and other promoted routes.<sup>70</sup> Examples of promoted routes include the:

- **Serpent Trail:** a 107km footpath that snakes its way through the countryside from Haslemere to Petersfield, showcasing some of the outstanding landscapes of the greensand ridges and linking areas of Access Land; and
- **Shipwrights Way:** a 96km route which runs from Alice Holt Forest to Portsmouth. On completion, the route will be available for walkers, cyclists and, in parts, horse riders, and buggies and trampers for the disabled.



69 Quiet lanes are minor rural roads that are appropriate for use by walkers, cyclists, horse riders and other vehicles. (DfT Circular 02/2006)

70 Promoted routes are recreational routes, usually on public rights of way, specifically signed and promoted to attract users. They may be developed and promoted by the Local Highways Authorities, or by third parties, in partnership with LHAs, or independently

## Open access

Access Land is land which is open to the public under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) 2000. The public are able to walk freely over this land without having to stay on paths. In the National Park the majority of the Access Land is unimproved downland with some areas of heathland in the Western Weald and a number of Common Land sites. Access Land is classified as mountain, moor, heath, down and registered Common Land, so the amount of CROW Access Land mapped in the National Park reflects this.

We are the access authority for Access Land and it is our job to ensure Access Land is open to the public. While the majority of the designated sites are available for public use, some 16 sites could be described as unavailable or inaccessible.<sup>71</sup> This can be for a number of reasons. For example, some are 'island' locations, so called because there are currently no rights of way or permissive routes by which the public could reach them. In other places, dense, impenetrable scrub means that some sites are unavailable to walkers. We are working closely with landowners to enable public access to all the designated open Access Land.

The Serpent Trail is an example of one route which successfully joins up areas of Access Land (CROW Access Land, Common Land and other open access) providing an exceptional recreational experience.



### Key facts: Access Land

4.4 per cent of the National Park in 311 separate sites has been designated as Access Land (8,500ha).

An additional 5 per cent of the National Park is other open Access Land such as Country Parks and land managed by the National Trust or Forestry Commission.



Enjoying open Access Land at Butser Hill © SDNPA

71 SDNPA (2012) *Open Access in the South Downs: An Evaluation of Access Land*, SDNPA

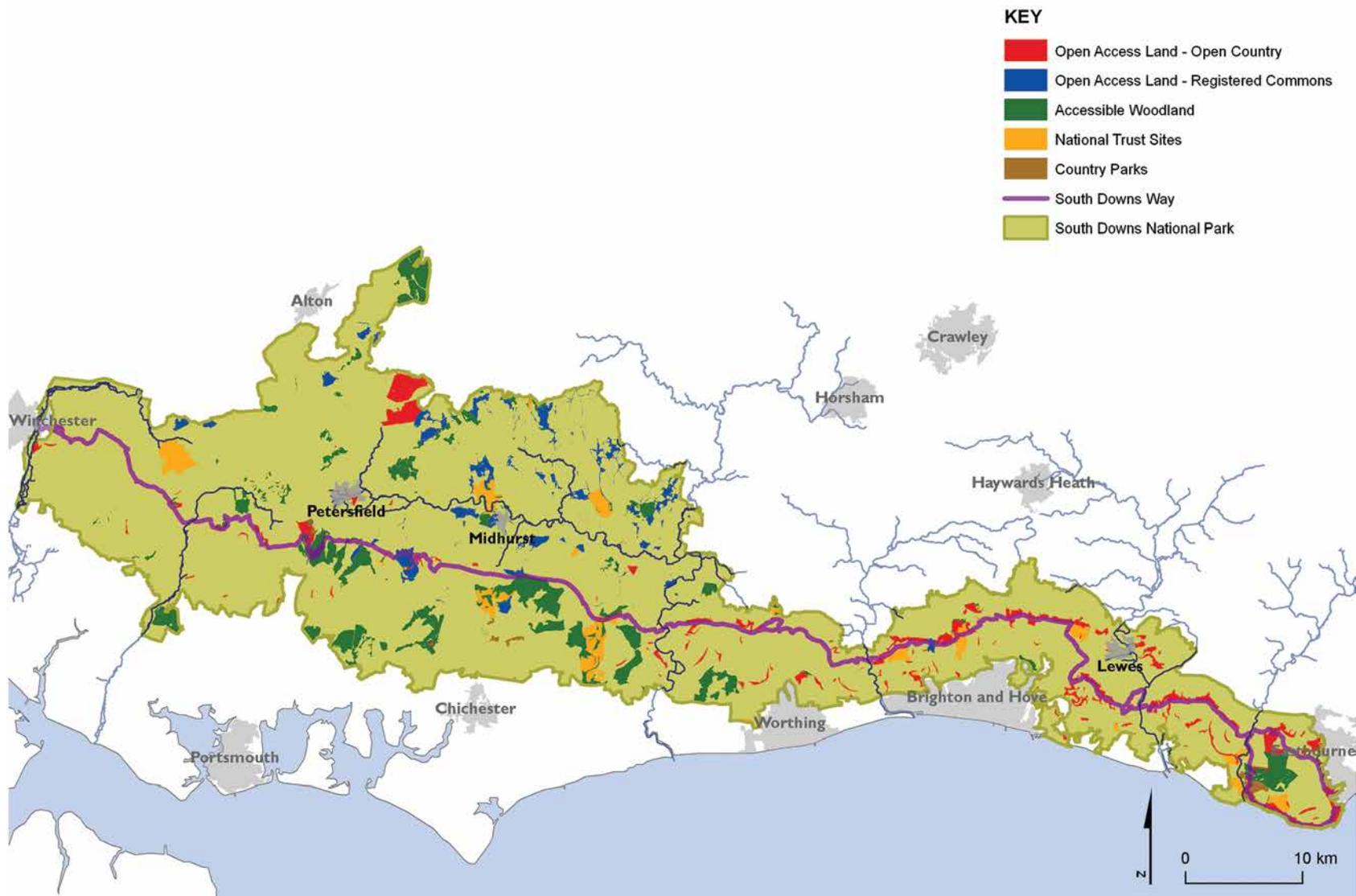
## Map 6.1

The main types of open Access Land in the National Park.

Maps prepared by:  
GeoSpec, University of  
Brighton; February 2012.

Sources: Natural England,  
2003; Woods for People,  
2010; National Trust,  
2011; Natural England,  
2010

Ordnance Survey Crown  
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## Access to water

The National Park has a diverse range of rivers, coastal and inland waters, which provide a rich resource for wildlife, biodiversity and, in some areas, recreation.

A public right of navigation exists on the tidal reaches of the rivers and boating activities from canoeing to motorboat cruising take place. However, the value of the tidal rivers for water activities is constrained by the limited number of access points. It is therefore often only the most determined who take to the river and experience the delights of the National Park by water:



*The cut off meanders of the river Cuckmere provide an excellent resource for canoeists and a safe learning environment for beginners taught at the Seven Sisters Canoe Centre*

© [www.cvcc.org.uk](http://www.cvcc.org.uk)

See the story of water in the National Park in the Water Fact File.

## Activities for everyone

### On land

Walking is probably the most popular of all activities taking place in the National Park. In the 2003 South Downs Survey, 25 per cent of visitors cited walking as the primary reason for their visit, with a further 37 per cent indicating walking as a secondary reason.<sup>72</sup> The rights of way network is also used for off-road running and orienteering.

Cycling and mountain biking are increasingly popular activities. Data from the South Downs Way online surveys and people counters between May 2009 and April 2012 indicates that at least 30 per cent of users are cyclists with some locations identifying more than 60 per cent of users as cyclists.<sup>73</sup>

With more than 1,500km of bridleways, restricted byways, and byways open to all traffic (BOATs), horse riding is a significant activity in the National Park. Carriage driving takes place on restricted byways and BOATs and also, by permissive agreement, on some National Trust Land. Accessing bridleways can be an issue for riders, with a shortage of parking for horse boxes across the National Park: some key operated schemes are in place but height restriction barriers prevent access in many public car parks.<sup>74</sup>



**We need help with mapping the bridleway network in relation to the availability of horsebox parking and equestrian facilities.**

Motorcycle and 4x4 use of BOATs is determined by their location, with the majority of BOATs located in Hampshire. Rural roads are also used by recreational motorcyclists and by classic car owners and regular classic car rallies take place in various locations across the National Park.

<sup>72</sup> Tourism South East and Geoff Broom Associates (2004) *Visitor Survey of the Proposed South Downs National Park, 2003–2004*, Countryside Agency

<sup>73</sup> South Downs Way People Counters at Old Winchester Hill Jan–July 2010

<sup>74</sup> Tricia Butcher (2011) *British Horse Society and Countryside Access Forum West Sussex*, West Sussex County Council

In recent years a number of new sports and activities have sprung up, including mountain boarding and zorbing. These activities are generally provided by commercial operators and people pay to take part. Alice Holt Forest and Queen Elizabeth Country Park are also home to commercial recreational ventures such as cycle hire, Laser Games and the tree-top adventure GoApe. In fact, many recreational activities in the National Park are organised by independent operators.



### We need data on number, type, scale and distribution of these businesses.

There has been a marked growth in the number of mass participation events such as walks and cycle rides. Records for the period 2010–2012 show approximately 40 registered events take place annually on the South Downs Way during the period March to October. However, events are known to take place all year round and many smaller organised events may not be registered.<sup>75</sup> While such events are generally seen as a positive thing, there is concern that they may also contribute to path erosion, litter, traffic congestion and car parking problems.

Generally, recreational activity is unevenly distributed across the National Park. The 2003/04 visitor survey indicated that 91 per cent of recreational visits took place in Sussex, with a significant percentage of these visits concentrated at popular sites such as Devil's Dyke and Seven Sisters Country Park.<sup>76</sup> A number of factors influence the distribution of visitors, including ease of access – the availability of public transport, car parking and other associated facilities. Awareness of alternative sites is also a factor influencing destination choice and in order to manage pressure on vulnerable sites a review of the reasons behind visitors' choice of destination would enable us to promote and develop alternative areas.

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75 South Downs National Park Authority (2012) *South Downs Way Events Listing*, South Downs National Park Authority

76 Tourism South East and Geoff Broom Associates (2004) *Visitor Survey of the Proposed South Downs National Park, 2003–2004*, Countryside Agency



*Mass participation events like the British Heart Foundation Challenge are excellent opportunities for healthy exercise © British Heart Foundation*

## On water

Non-tidal rivers are generally not available for boating unless by prior agreement with landowners. Angling opportunities in rivers, lakes, ponds and the sea abound. Data from the Environment Agency indicates that angling and recreational sea fishing takes place at more than 160 different locations across the National Park.<sup>77</sup> Coarse angling tends to take place either within a traditional club structure where clubs and societies lease riparian fishing rights or at commercial coarse fisheries, where day tickets are available, usually on still waters or ponds. The chalk rivers at the western end of the National Park are high value game fisheries of national and international significance, whereas the coarse angling, sea fishing and other water related activities such as canoeing and boating have a more local or regional audience.

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77 Environment Agency (2012) Recreation data based on WFD bodies, Environment Agency

While we currently have little data on participation in and demand for water based activities in the National Park, the 2011/12 visitor survey will show the percentage of visitors and residents participating in water-based recreation.<sup>78</sup>

### In the air

There are a number of significant sites for air sports, with hillside take off points for paragliding and hang gliding in various locations across the National Park. Mount Caburn, just outside Lewes, is popular with a number of paragliding companies and Salt Hill, East Meon, is also used for paragliding and hang gliding. Model aircraft flying, hot air ballooning, gliding, microlight and small aircraft flying also take place. There is concern that noise from some flying activity may impact on tranquillity. However, we know relatively little about the provision of and participation in air sports and would like to build up a more accurate picture of these recreational activities.



**We need data on the provision of, and participation in, air sports.**



*Paragliding at Devil's Dyke © David Russell*

78 The South Downs Visitor Survey 2011/2012 will be published in November 2012

## Case Study Karen Whittaker



Karen Whittaker works for the National Trust as the Visitor Experience Project Manager for the South Downs, based at Saddlescombe Farm on the route of the South Downs Way, near Brighton. The National Trust has recently opened a campsite at the farm and is planning a camping barn to encourage people to enjoy the route in a more sustainable way.

"The South Downs Way is well loved and people come from far and wide to walk its length, do 'boot sized' chunks over a weekend, or just pop up on the bus after work and enjoy what John Constable described as 'the grandest view in the world'. Good news travels far and I have recently taken a booking from someone in New Zealand planning to walk the South Downs Way. A school group recently visited from inner-city London and the children loved it, this area is a real breath of fresh air for many people.

Even somewhere that looks wild and unspoilt takes careful land management. The National Trust manages over 6,000ha of land on the South Downs cared for by more than 35 wardens working with a huge team of volunteers. Without them the area would look very different. All year round you will spot teams working on the steep slopes clearing scrub or even recently making over the chalk horse on the side of the hill near Birling Gap.

The South Downs wrap themselves around many villages, towns and cities which benefit from being on their doorstep – economically, environmentally and in quality of life. The people who walk and cycle here utilise the local shops, accommodation, transport and outdoors sports businesses, benefiting local communities and visitors alike."

## Issues with recreation

Recreational users can cause problems for land managers, for example, by allowing dogs to disturb grazing animals. Illegal use of rights of way by motorised vehicles can be a problem in some parts of the National Park, although this does not appear to be widespread. Conflicts of interest occur in some places, for example, where 4x4 vehicles have caused significant damage to some BOATs making them inaccessible to other users. As part of our 2011/12 Visitor Survey, we spoke to land managers to gauge the scale and nature of the recreational impacts they experience. The results will inform the basis of our work to promote responsible use of the countryside.<sup>79</sup>

## Health and well-being

It is generally accepted that access to open space and the natural environment can provide health benefits, particularly in relation to heart disease, stroke and mental health. The New Horizons Department of Mental Health strategy states that the 'Increasing availability of urban green spaces, views of and access to safe green spaces and greater engagement with the Natural Environment has been found to have multiple benefits for mental and physical health.'<sup>80</sup> The Government is therefore looking to National Parks to help deliver its targets to improve the health of the nation.<sup>81</sup>

Having access to the natural environment is crucial if communities inside and within easy reach of the National Park are to benefit from the health and well-being opportunities provided. The New Horizons study indicates that generally people are healthy in the National Park; where health issues do exist they tend to be in the urban areas surrounding the National Park.



**For a map showing indices of multiple deprivation for health.**

79 *Ibid*

80 Department of Health Mental Health Division (2009) *New Horizons*, DoH

81 Defra (2010) *National Parks Circular*, Defra

A recent study commissioned by Natural England, on behalf of the South Downs National Park Authority, examined the existing access network using the Accessible Natural Greenspace standards (ANGst) as a guide and identifies where the network is deficient in the National Park and surrounding local authority areas.<sup>82</sup>

### Box 6.3 Accessible Natural Greenspace (ANG)

**ANG is defined as sites which are fully accessible to the public in the sense that people are free to roam at will. This definition includes country parks, community woodlands, some nature resources and publicly accessible greenspaces within urban areas which have a natural character.**

While the statistics suggest access to ANG is relatively good across the National Park, there are some locations, particularly in urban areas, where the population has limited access. This data, when overlaid with information on the density of the public rights of way network highlights areas immediately adjacent to the National Park where communities lack access to both rights of way and ANG.

A more detailed analysis was carried out in one district council area (Chichester), including an examination of health scores in relation to ANG. Some areas outside the National Park which lacked ANG had the lowest health scores for the district. Similar detailed analysis of the data for the National Park would help determine priority areas for the creation of more Accessible Natural Greenspace to serve the needs of the communities within and adjacent to it.



**For more information on Accessible Natural Greenspace in the National Park.**

## Barriers to access

While we know many people every year are able to visit, enjoy and learn about the National Park, there are also large sections of the population who never visit the National Park or experience outdoor recreation. Learning in the Natural Environment (LINE) has been shown to provide direct education,

82 South Downs National Park Authority and Natural England (2011) *Access Network Mapping South Downs National Park and Adjacent Districts*, SDNPA and Natural England

health and psychological benefits and indirect benefits ranging from social to financial.<sup>83</sup> Yet, many people and young people, in particular, are losing their connection with nature which some term 'Nature Deficit Disorder'.<sup>84</sup> According to Kings College, London, 'This 'extinction of experience' has a detrimental long-term impact on environmental attitudes and behaviours.'

 **For more information on Nature Deficit Disorder.**

The proximity of the National Park to major urban centres whose population is both diverse and, at times, disconnected with the opportunities for recreation activities and learning experiences that the National Park provides, presents both opportunities and challenges.

In this section, we consider what we know about who visits the National Park and explore the possible reasons why some people do not visit.

### Physical and economic barriers

In some cases people do not visit because of physical or economic barriers. For instance, in the 2003/04 Visitor Survey, 17 per cent of non-visiting households in the catchment cited not having access to a car as the main reason for not currently visiting the National Park.<sup>85</sup>

Public transport, where it is available, is not generally associated with recreational travel and, unless actively promoted through initiatives such as Discover Bus Walks, or especially targeted towards leisure users such as The Breeze Up to the Downs Bus, it tends not to be the usual means by which people visit the National Park. In addition the cost of transport to the National Park has been identified as a barrier to access for some groups, including schools.

83 Kings College London (2011) *LINE Benefits*, Kings College London

84 Richard Louv (2005) *Last Child in the Woods*, Algonquin Book

85 Tourism South East and Geoff Broom Associates (2004) *Visitor Survey of the Proposed South Downs National Park, 2003–2004*, Countryside Agency

Physical barriers may prevent people with disabilities from enjoying the National Park. Gates, stiles, uneven path surfaces or steep gradients can all be barriers. As much of the area is farmed, there are many thousands of gates and stiles on rights of way and Access Land for the purpose of stock control.

#### Box 6.4 Disability access

At a meeting of the South Downs Local Access Forum in January 2012, members heard of the access difficulties experienced by Hampshire Roamability and 4 Sight Ramblers. Barriers included stiles on footpaths, unsuitable surfaces, uncertainty about the presence of livestock and a lack of information about suitable paths and trails.



**We need data on the accessibility of the rights of way network, Access Land and visitor attractions.**



**We need data on the number of users experiencing access difficulties when visiting the National Park.**



*Disabled user on accessible path at Beachy Head © Anne Purkiss*

## Cultural and social barriers

Cultural barriers can range from generational poverty to fears and misconceptions, and lack of appreciation and understanding of the physical, emotional and social benefits of spending time in the outdoors. A lack of appropriate information on opportunities for getting involved can also act as a significant barrier.

## Under-represented groups

According to the *National Park Circular, 2010*, some groups, such as ethnic minorities, young people, disadvantaged groups and disabled people, visit national parks less often than others. A proactive approach is therefore required to overcome the barriers preventing these groups from visiting and experiencing national parks.<sup>86</sup>

In fact, the *South Downs Visitor Survey, 2003/04*, showed those who visit are more likely to be older, car-owning white adults in employment, and from higher occupational grades. Those least likely to visit are young adults, ethnic minorities, people in low-income jobs and those who do not own a car. Only 3 per cent of all visitor groups included one or more people with a physical or mental health disability.

In terms of socioeconomic group, only 22 per cent of visitors fell into the C2DE social grading, again under-representative of the regional demographic where 49.9 per cent are within this socioeconomic demographic. The demographics of the National Park are explored more fully in Chapter 8.

Other groups that are statistically under-represented in the visitor profile include people from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups. Within the 2003/04 visitor survey BME visitors made up less than 1 per cent of the visitor profile. Nationally, 10 per cent of the population are from BME backgrounds and within the south east region this figure is considerably higher. Mosaic is a three-year project led by the Campaign for National Parks in partnership with all the English national parks and the Youth Hostel Association (YHA) funded through Access to Nature as part of The Big Lottery Fund's Changing Spaces

programme. In the South Downs National Park, Mosaic has resulted in the recruitment, training and support of 29 volunteer Community Champions who work with us (and 6 joint Community Champions with the New Forest National Park) and its partners to address the barriers preventing BME groups from visiting and enjoying the National Park.

### Box 6.5 Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE)

In 2009, Natural England, the Forestry Commission and Defra commissioned a new survey called Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) to provide baseline and trend data on how people use the natural environment in England. We have commissioned bespoke analysis of this survey data for the National Park which will enable us to develop our understanding of how people engage with the natural environment. This will underpin our work to remove barriers and open up opportunities for all sectors of society.<sup>87</sup>



For analysis of MENE data.

## Learning within the National Park

### Informal learning

The National Park provides a wealth of informal learning experiences where people can develop a real 'sense of place' and become stewards for its future. These informal learning opportunities include public events, organised activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award and uniformed group visits, visitor attractions including the wealth of cultural and heritage sites, outdoor learning establishments and a host of publications and new media.

Public events are an important way of connecting with the huge potential audience around the National Park. In 2010/2011 we took part in 26 events and the highly visible, popular and visual displays were seen by more than

86 Defra (2010) *National Park Circular*, Defra

87 [www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/linkingpeople/mene/default.aspx](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/linkingpeople/mene/default.aspx)

200,000 people. We engaged directly with around 15,000 people at these events. The staffing for these events included 80 days of volunteer time.<sup>88</sup>

In addition to these public events, many organisations and societies provide guided walks on a variety of themes. For example, the South Downs Society offers a wide spectrum of walks and talks catering for all levels of ability. Their Green Travel Walks week from 17–24 September 2011 provided 15 walks in a variety of locations around the National Park including East Meon and Ditchling Beacon, attracting a total of 127 participants. Other organisations providing broad programmes of walks and talks include the Sussex Wildlife Trust, the Ramblers, the National Trust and site specific providers including the Gilbert White Museum in Selborne.



*The SDNPA attends almost 30 events across the area each year © SDNPA*

Community participation in conservation activities is another important aspect of informal learning. For example, the Steyning Downland Scheme links people with different interests or knowledge promoting learning and building a positive experience of community.



**For more information about the Steyning Downland Scheme.**

Figures on groups such as Brownies, Scouts and Girl Guides, and Duke of Edinburgh Award participation are less well known at present. There is work to be done to gather baseline data for this important area of participation which will begin in 2012/2013.

### Formal education

Those in formal education are a key audience for the National Park with several hundred thousand school and college learners resident within and around it and rich opportunities to promote lifelong learning.

There are 738 schools inside or within 5 kilometres of the National Park boundary (86 of which are inside it).<sup>89</sup> These represent formal education settings from Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) through to sixth form colleges, and include both independent and private sector provision, along with special schools. These schools cut across the three county council areas and unitary authority of Brighton and Hove and provide a huge potential audience for learning experiences within the National Park. The available information on special school provision and Early Years Foundation Stage is less accurate and there are providers other than schools within this sector that may not appear on the current database.



**For a map of schools within the National Park.**



**We need help with data on Early Years Foundation Stage and Special School provision as this is currently less well represented on the database.**

88 South Downs National Park Authority (2011) *Events Review*, SDNPA

89 South Downs National Park Authority (2012) *Schools Database*, SDNPA

*The Visitor Survey 2003/04* educational use questionnaire conducted by Tourism South East (TSE) provided evidence of school engagement with outdoor providers within the area of the now South Downs National Park. This survey was completed by 238 schools in and around the National Park and indicated that the vast majority of schools (97 per cent) were aware of the area. Of those surveyed 69 per cent had visited or were planning to visit the area for educational purposes during 2003/04.

This data, although very useful in building a picture of school engagement with outdoor learning provision, is now outdated, particularly as the results were gathered before the South Downs was granted National Park status. A new survey was commissioned as part of the 2011/12 visitor survey of the National Park which includes similar questions to the 2003/04 data. Early results from this survey indicate that while only 60 per cent of responding schools have visited or plan to visit the National Park this academic year, 88 per cent are interested in further developing learning outside the classroom opportunities.<sup>90</sup> This data will be enhanced by a comprehensive survey of all schools within the 5km buffer as part of the innovative *Our South Downs* partnership learning project launched across the National Park in 2012 by the South Downs National Park Authority and the national charity, Learning through Landscapes.

There are around 37 key providers of outdoor learning opportunities across the National Park with many other smaller scale providers working across a range of thematic areas including environmental education, wildlife sites, country parks, museums and heritage sites, farm visits and outdoor adventurous activities. These providers present a rich and varied offer to both formal and informal education sectors. Currently eight of these providers have gained Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge status, demonstrating the provision of high quality learning experiences. This figure is likely to rise as the badge becomes more widely known within formal education audiences.

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90 Tourism South East (2004) *South Downs National Park Visitor Survey Educational Use Questionnaire*, and draft for 2011/12, Tourism South East



**Children getting their first taste of outdoor learning at Alice Holt © Forestry Commission**

In June 2007, 29 environmental centres were surveyed across both East and West Sussex as part of the Wildfowl and Wetland Trust (WWT) Consulting Review of Environmental Centres in the Pan Sussex Area. The results of this survey reveal the total number of educational visits per year for the 21 centres that were able to supply data was 80,118 – a huge formal education audience.

In addition to this outdoor learning provision there are currently 16 higher and further education establishments on the South Downs Learning Partnership providing a wide range of courses and qualifications from foundation learning, vocational Certificates and Diplomas, GCSEs, A Levels, Foundation Degrees to Degrees across all subjects. First brought together in September 2011, the Learning Partnership aims to provide an effective mechanism for communication between academic institutions in and around the National Park and the South Downs National Park Authority. There are numerous informal links between the schools, colleges and universities within and around the National Park. However, these are not well documented and more information is required to achieve the vision for learning within the National Park. The development of a South Downs National Park Research Strategy will be key to addressing this gap.<sup>91</sup>

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91 Learning Partnership Terms of Reference (October 2011)

Despite this high level of learning provision across the National Park there are still areas that experience deprivation in terms of education, skills and training. Two of these areas are among the 20 per cent most deprived nationally, 27 are among the 20 per cent least deprived nationally.

 For a map showing indices of multiple deprivation for education, skills and training.

### Interpretation and information

Interpretation, or helping people to make sense of the landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage, is a key mechanism for communicating with the diverse audiences in and around the National Park. It increases understanding of this special place and enhances visitors' experience. Interpretation is available across the National Park, much of it provided independently by a range of partners and stakeholders.

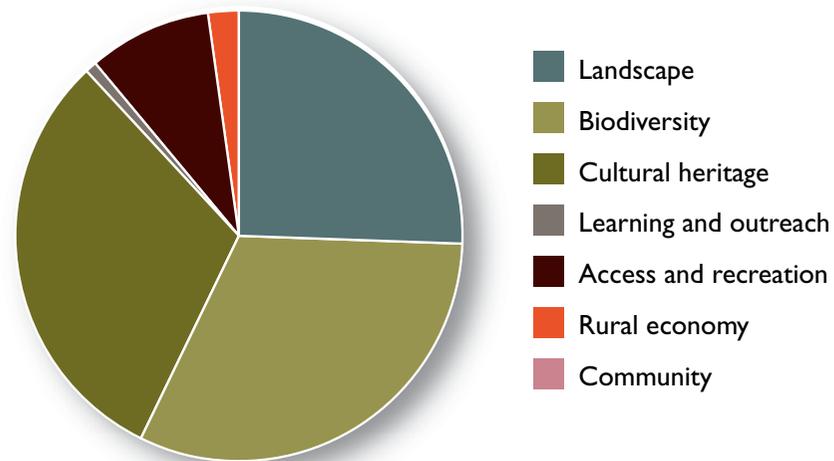
To gather baseline data a quantitative and qualitative audit of interpretation across the National Park was undertaken between October and December 2011.<sup>92</sup> In total, 35 key sites representative of the National Park were included. Some of these are complex locations with several stories to tell and multiple items of interpretation. The sites correlate with those selected for the South Downs National Park Visitor Survey (commissioned September 2011). The interpretation audit will support and enhance the findings of the visitor survey. Key partners providing interpretation across the National Park were also interviewed as part of the research including the National Trust, Forestry Commission, Hampshire Wildlife Trust, Sussex Wildlife Trust and Natural England.

The audit concluded that the main topics currently interpreted are:

1. biodiversity;
2. cultural heritage;
3. landscape; and
4. recreation.

<sup>92</sup> South Downs National Park Authority (2011) *Interpretation Audit of the South Downs National Park*, SDNPA

Figure 6.1 Interpretative theme



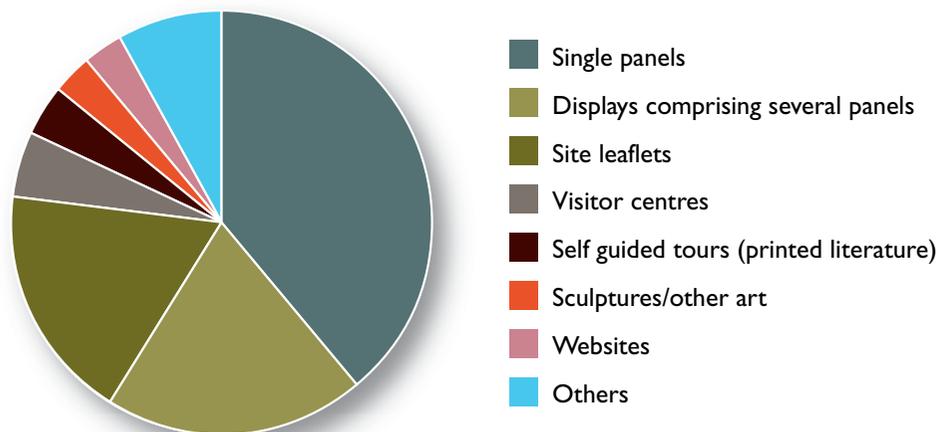
Source: *South Downs National Park Interpretation Audit (December 2011)* SDNPA

Other topics were less well represented through interpretive means, especially geology and land management, and in some cases there were mixed messages, particularly surrounding heathland interpretation.

Interpretation across the National Park takes many forms, although much is in the form of traditional means of display panels and leaflets. Of the 87 interpretive items assessed during the audit, 29 per cent were panels, 20 per cent displays and 18 per cent leaflets. Other media included websites, visitor centres, museums, sculpture or other art presentations, and self guided tours using printed literature.

 For more findings from the Interpretation Audit.

Figure 6.2 Interpretation method



Source: South Downs National Park Interpretation Audit (December 2011) South Downs National Park Authority

Information is provided across the National Park in various forms, including extensive printed literature such as walks leaflets, public transport guides and special-interest publications.<sup>93</sup> There is also a growing, but still fledgling, use of new media to provide both information and interpretation about the National Park. This includes the use of mobile phone Apps such as the Sussex Wildlife Trust App and one currently being developed by the South Downs National Park Authority.

The 2003/04 Visitor Survey investigated the use of information sources by visitors. Maps or other sources of information had been used before or during the visit by 30 per cent of all visitors, including 25 per cent of all day visitors and 59 per cent of overnight visitors. Ordnance Survey maps were most frequently mentioned by these visitors (27 per cent), particularly by staying visitors. In

contrast, day visitors were most likely to state 'previous knowledge of the area' as their main source of information (34 per cent).<sup>94</sup>

## Volunteering

Volunteering is fundamental to the life of the National Park, enabling vital conservation and access work to be carried out along with rural skills development, guided walks and survey work relating to species and rights of way. This significantly enhances the capacity of organisations to deliver National Park purposes. The commitment and involvement of local people helps communities to develop a closer relationship with their countryside and fosters better understanding of the issues relating to its management. In essence, volunteers become 'ambassadors' for the National Park. Volunteering opportunities, particularly outdoors, also offer recognised mental and physical health and well-being benefits to those taking part.

In recognition of its importance, an audit of volunteering opportunities across the National Park was conducted in January 2012. This identified 165 organisations offering volunteering opportunities which were pertinent to the National Park's purposes.<sup>95</sup> This amounts to an estimated 10,500 people volunteering in the National Park on an annual basis, collectively undertaking around 91,000 days of voluntary work. If the national minimum wage of £6.08 per hour is applied to this, the work can be valued as contributing around £3,872,900 to the environment and culture of the National Park.<sup>96</sup>

The importance of volunteering within 'active communities' is explored in Chapter 8.

94 Tourism South East and Geoff Broom Associates (2004) *Visitor Survey of the Proposed South Downs National Park 2003/2004*, Countryside Agency

95 South Downs National Park Authority (2012) *Volunteer Audit: Resources for Change*, SDNPA

96 *Ibid*

93 South Downs National Park Authority (2011) *Publications Audit*, SDNPA

## Case Study Marilyn Marchant



Marilyn Marchant has been a volunteer ranger in the South Downs for four years. She works one day a week in the eastern end of the National Park.

"I first got involved in volunteering as I wanted to have more time for myself and to get out on the beautiful South Downs. As well as the opportunity to learn new skills and meet new people, the physical work really appealed to me. To spend time every week in the great outdoors has been life changing.

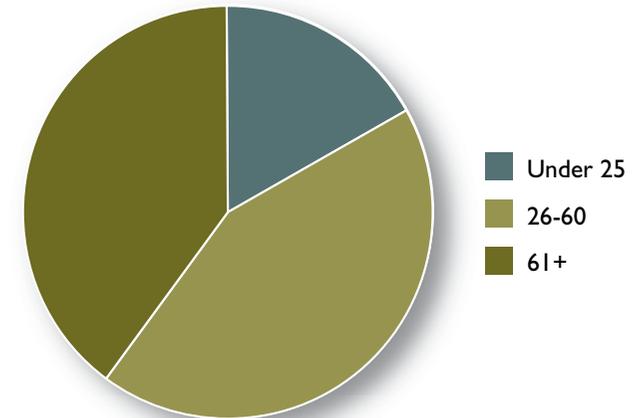
Volunteering gives me such a buzz. Discovering new places off the beaten track, working with new friends and feeling like I have really made a difference. I have learnt so much about the local landscape and appreciate the diversity and accessibility of it even more.

Each week is different, depending on the time of year we could be carrying out scrub clearance, coppicing or processing trees that have come down or need to be cleared. The work can be very demanding – who needs to go to a gym? The work not only assists in the effective land management of the National Park but also has a beneficial effect on biodiversity.

There is a great social element to volunteering and I have met a wide range of like-minded people from different backgrounds, all of whom bring their own unique skills and expertise, as well as fun, to the team. There are 5–9 volunteers who go out on the same day as me. We all regularly work together and have become great friends."

The South Downs Volunteer Ranger Service (VRS) is a key part of this volunteering effort. Celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2011, the 311 volunteers in the VRS voted overwhelmingly on 1 April 2011 to affiliate to the South Downs National Park Authority.

Figure 6.3 National Park-wide volunteer age profiles



Source: South Downs National Park Authority (2012) *South Downs Volunteer Audit: Resources for Change*, SDNPA

Trends over time show that the total number of volunteers within the VRS has increased steadily over the last decade but with a slight decline evident in the last 12 months. This can be attributed to the loss of key volunteer positions and a freeze in volunteer recruitment during the establishment of the National Park. The VRS carried out 729 tasks in 2010/2011, equating to 5,686 days of volunteering effort.<sup>97</sup>

This breadth and level of volunteering makes an immense difference to the National Park and furthers the opportunities for recreational activities and learning experiences for many thousands of volunteers.



For more data on volunteering.

<sup>97</sup> South Downs National Park Authority (2012) *South Downs Volunteer Audit: Resources for Change*, SDNPA

# Key data: Great opportunities for recreational activities and learning experiences



## South Downs Way National Trail

The National Park Authority, working with our partners, will monitor progress against two standards from the National Trail Quality Standards for the South Downs Way:

- **Key data:**
  - The percentage of each trail that is off-road (Measure no.3);
  - Number of road crossings which need improvements to make safe (Measure no.4).
- **Current position:**
  - 93.6 per cent of the South Downs Way is off-road;
  - Improvements are needed to nine road crossings on the South Downs Way.
- **Data source:** South Downs National Park Authority (2010) *Measuring Quality Standards on National Trails Full Survey*, unpublished
- **Responsibility for data collection:** South Downs National Park Authority.

## Learning outside the classroom

The National Park Authority will monitor changes in the percentage of schools visiting the National Park for educational purposes:

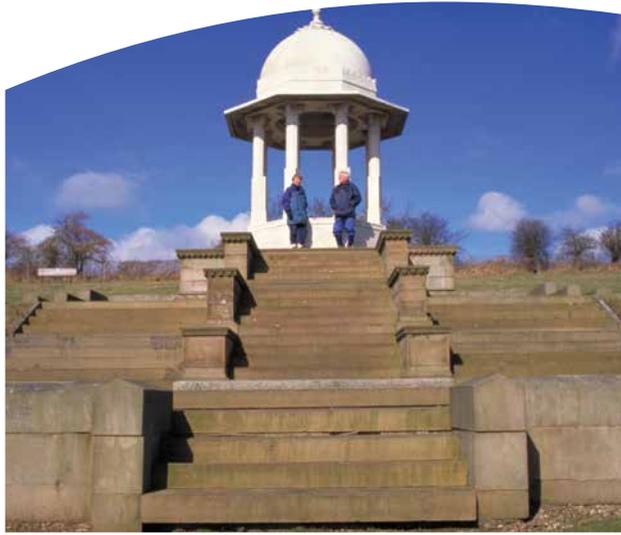
- **Key data:** Percentage of schools within 5km buffer using the South Downs National Park for Learning Outside the Classroom experiences at least once a year.
- **Current position:** Baseline data is being collected during 2012 as part of the schools audit of Our South Downs Project. Current baseline figures from TSE educational questionnaire (on a small sample size) is 69 per cent.

- **Data Source:** Tourism South East (2003/2004) *TSE Education Questionnaire*, Tourism South East; South Downs National Park Authority (2012) *Our South Downs Project*, SDNPA
- **Responsibility for data collection:** South Downs National Park Authority.

## Volunteer numbers

The National Park Authority will monitor changes in the number of volunteers carrying out volunteer tasks across the National Park relevant to National Park purposes:

- **Key data:** Total number of people volunteering in the National Park in an area relevant to National Park purposes.
- **Current position:** There are currently 10,500 volunteers working in the National Park on an annual basis on tasks relevant to National Park purposes.
- **Data source:** South Downs National Park Authority (2012) *Volunteer Audit: Resources for Change*, SDNPA
- **Responsibility for data collection:** South Downs National Park Authority.



## Chapter 7

# WELL-CONSERVED HISTORICAL FEATURES AND A RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE

The distinct character of many areas of the South Downs National Park has been created by well-conserved historical features, some of which are rare and of national importance. Bronze Age barrows, Iron Age hill forts, Saxon and Norman churches, dew ponds, historic houses and landmarks of the two World Wars help to give the National Park strong links to its past human settlement. These links are reinforced by the variety of architectural building styles spanning the ages. Evidence of earlier farming traditions can still be seen today in the pattern of field boundaries, and relics of the industrial past remain in the form of old iron workings, brickworks, quarries and ancient coppiced woodlands.

The National Park has a rich cultural heritage of art, music and rural traditions. There is a strong association with well-known writers, poets,

musicians and artists who have captured the essence of this most English of landscapes and drawn inspiration from the sense of place: Virginia Woolf, Jane Austen, Hilaire Belloc, Edward Thomas, Gilbert White, Edward Elgar, Joseph Turner, Eric Gill and Eric Ravilious, among many others. Today traditions continue through activities such as folk singing and events like Findon sheep fair. Culture lives on with new art and expression, celebrating the strong traditions of the past.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>98</sup> South Downs National Park Authority (2011) *Special Qualities of the South Downs National Park*, SDNPA

The South Downs and Western Weald have an extremely rich cultural heritage illustrated in the density of features from all periods of history, a point which was explicitly recognised by English Heritage in its evidence to the Public Inquiry into the designation of the National Park.

Cultural heritage is one of the most important and treasured aspects of this National Park and includes the traditions of the communities living and working in it, as well as the work of creative people both past and present.

This chapter looks at important and distinctive features of the archaeology, listed buildings, heritage collections and significant cultural features of the National Park, and their condition. Some issues are better understood than others and so the report highlights the gaps in our knowledge.



Old Winchester Hill is an important Iron Age site © SDNPA/Anne Purkiss

### Box 7.1 Cultural heritage of the South Downs National Park

Key aspects of the National Park's cultural heritage include:

- archaeological sites of the Bronze and Iron Ages;
- iconic villages and towns and their important features such as churches;
- early industrial sites from flint mines to ironworking furnaces;
- evidence of World War I and II;
- a varied range of historic buildings, often clustered in Conservation Areas
- designed parks and gardens; and
- artists, craft makers, scientists and thinkers inspired by this landscape.

There is legal protection for some parts of the cultural heritage of the National Park, usually based on a test of importance of the site to the nation:

- The most important archaeological sites are 'scheduled monuments'.<sup>99</sup>
- The most important buildings are 'listed'.<sup>100</sup>
- Areas of towns or villages can be designated as Conservation Areas'.<sup>101</sup>
- Designed parks and gardens and battlefields can be registered.<sup>102</sup>

99 Covered by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979

100 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

101 *Ibid*

102 These heritage assets are not protected under an Act of Parliament but are a 'material consideration' in any planning application

## Archaeology

It is often said that the South Downs is particularly rich in prehistoric remains. Although it is difficult to assess whether their density per hectare exceeds those we might expect in other landscapes in south east England, there is no doubt that the signs of many previous civilisations are extremely prominent, on the open chalk in particular. Archaeological investigations have been carried out in the National Park for over 100 years, yet much probably remains to be discovered, especially in the more densely wooded areas between the River Arun and the A3. English Heritage has helped to develop regional 'research agendas', two of which (for the South East and the South) straddle the National Park. However, neither is complete, and an archaeological research agenda for the area within the National Park might well be developed by the Learning Partnership.

As the archaeology of the South Downs is very varied it is best to look at individual time periods, including the 2011 'Heritage at Risk' entries.<sup>103</sup>



**English Heritage – Heritage at Risk:** [www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/heritage-at-risk/](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/heritage-at-risk/) and search for South Downs.

<sup>103</sup> It is important to note that Heritage at Risk does not consider future threats although we already know that coastal erosion is destroying the archaeology in those parts of the National Park

## Prehistory and Neolithic

The landscape provided food and shelter for hunter-gatherer peoples and the raw material for their flint tools. This low level of activity is known from the time of Boxgrove Man (around 500,000 years ago) until about 8000 years ago when people began to remove some of the tree cover.

With the coming of farming (the period known as the Neolithic), people started to mine flint to make tools on a much larger scale. They also built, for the first time, monuments that still stand in the landscape – in particular, hill-top 'causewayed camps'.<sup>104</sup> Both of these types of sites have been studied.



### Key facts: Flint mines

- Flint mines in the South Downs are some of the most significant in England.
- Flint mines were the first industry in the National Park, some 6000 years ago.

**Heritage at Risk Register:** Two flint mines within the National Park are listed as 'Heritage at Risk'.

<sup>104</sup> Large enclosed areas that are probably not defensive sites as the ditch is not continuous

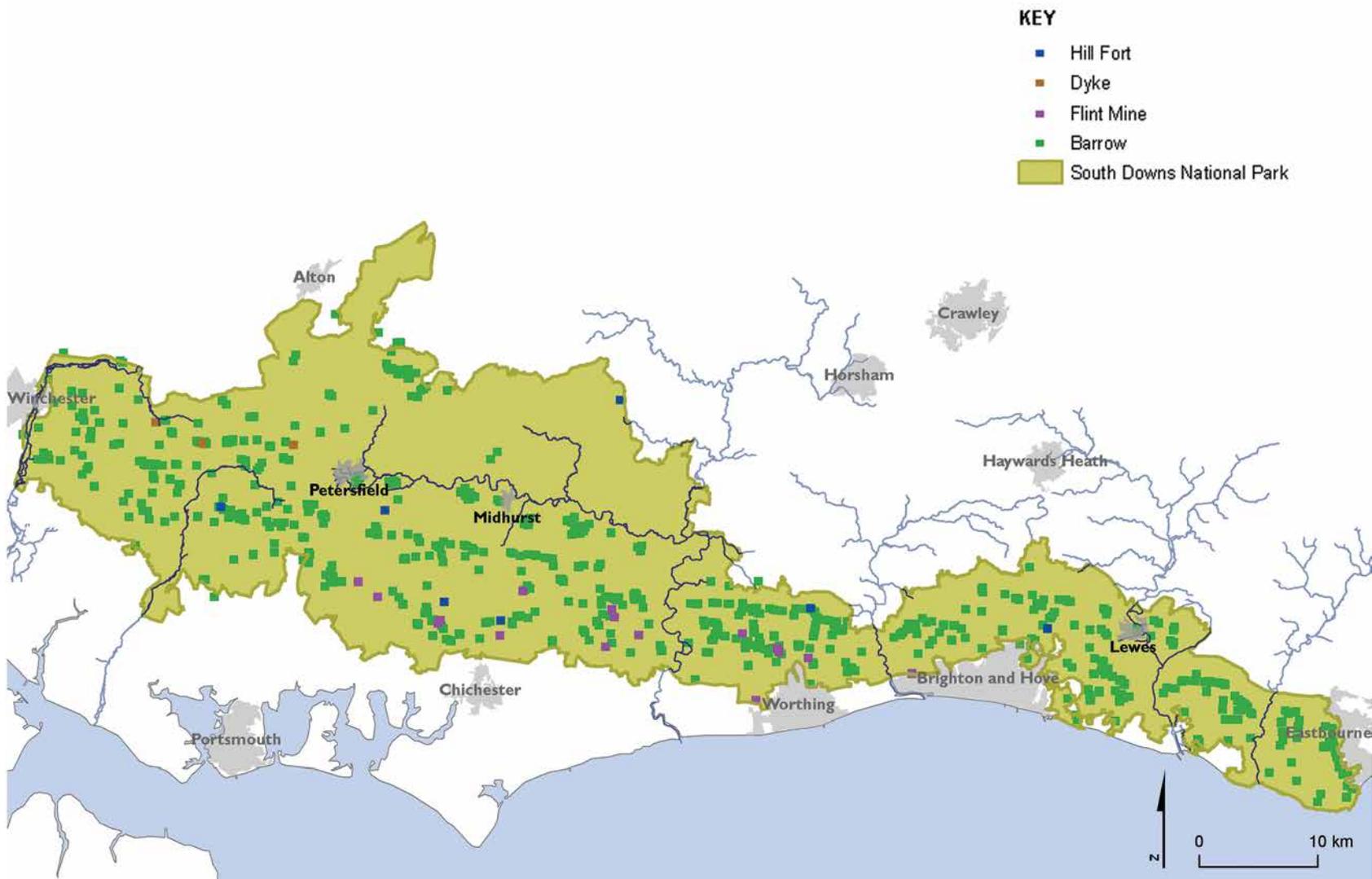
## Map 7.1

### Prehistoric sites in the National Park

Maps prepared by:  
GeoSpec, University of  
Brighton; February 2012.

Source: Historic  
Environment Records of Hampshire County  
Council, West Sussex  
County Council, East  
Sussex County Council,  
Chichester District  
Council and Winchester  
City Council, 2011

Ordnance Survey Crown  
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100050083.



## Bronze Age

Metal tools are first found in the Bronze Age, about 4,000 years ago. At this time there was a great increase in farming on the chalk downs, in particular, accompanied by soil erosion and environmental change. It was in the Bronze Age that people started to build burial monuments, called barrows, sometimes as large groups or cemeteries.

### Key facts: Barrows

- The barrows of the National Park are nationally important and the most significant barrow cemetery in the National Park is on Petersfield Heath.
- While some barrows are clustered on the South Downs Way they are also to be found on the chalk scarp and on the heathland of the Western Weald.

**Heritage at Risk Register:** 33 of the Heritage at Risk sites in the National Park are Bronze Age in date and 30 of these are sites with one or more barrows.



*One of the Devil's Jumps, a series of barrows near Treyford © Simon Burchill*

These early farmers have also left evidence of their settlements, hill-top enclosures, field systems and boundaries (known as cross-dykes). These sites are of national importance and have not been much studied as yet. Woodland cover in some parts of the National Park means aerial photographs are not effective and much more remains to be discovered. The 'In The High Woods Project' will use Light Detection And Ranging (LIDAR) technology to survey the densely wooded area between the A3 and the river Arun.

## Iron Age



*Iron Age hill fort – Old Winchester Hill © Commission Air*

Iron Age inhabitants of the South Downs also farmed the landscape and large areas of field systems and settlements are known. The survival of such sites is unusual and so the sites are nationally significant. Earthwork systems such as the Chichester Entrenchments and sites in the woodland around Arundel are also very important and not yet very well understood.

### Key facts: Iron Age sites at risk

**Heritage at Risk Register:** Parts of the Chichester Entrenchments, the Caburn hillfort, two field systems and a settlement are on the Heritage at Risk register.

## Roman period

The first purpose-built road systems in the National Park were built by the Roman army to link coastal landing places with London. At intervals along the road there were places where travellers could get refreshments, stay overnight or change their horses – there is one in the National Park at Hardham and another at Iping. There are long stretches of these roads in the National Park and they are regionally important.

Within the National Park there are a number of large Roman farms (called 'villas') of which the most elaborate is Bignor Villa – a site that is nationally important for its rich mosaics. There are also very many smaller and more modest farmsteads and temples. Some sites are still being discovered. In some parts of the National Park the significant feature of the Roman period was industrial scale production, especially of pottery, at sites such as Alice Holt Forest and Wiggonholt.



'Roman period' – Mosaic at Bignor Roman Villa © Tupper Family



### Key facts: Roman sites at risk

**Heritage at Risk Register:** The Heritage at Risk register includes one stretch of Roman road, a temple site and a villa/farmstead in the National Park.

## Saxon period

Through place names, historical accounts and archaeology we know that the Saxon settlers came to the National Park from more than one part of north Europe. The main archaeological evidence of their lives comes from cemetery sites. Some of these cemeteries are of national significance and all are of regional importance because so few are known.

Very few rural Saxon settlements have been excavated and so we know little about their lives and farming activity but studies of place names show that many features in the landscape were named by people who spoke Saxon languages. The Saxon period also saw the first development of towns within the National Park with Lewes being occupied in the late Saxon period.

By the 9th century the minor kingdoms of Saxon England were being brought together, with King Alfred creating a system of defensible places (Burham and Lewes within the National Park) to protect people, their livestock and valuables from the Viking raiders.



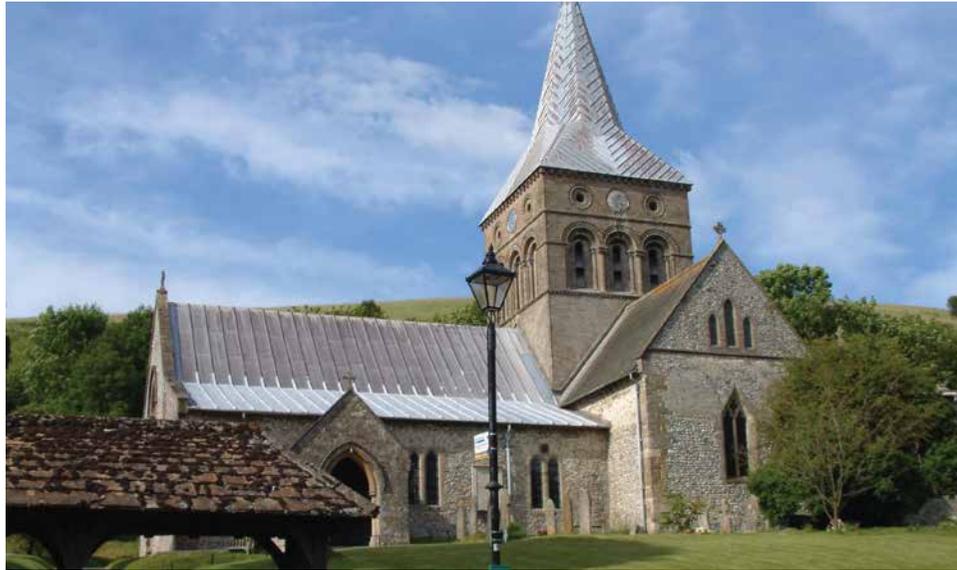
### Key facts: Saxon sites at risk

**Heritage at Risk Register:** There is only one Saxon site on the Heritage at Risk register. This is a cemetery site.

## Medieval

Following the Norman conquest of 1066, one of the first priorities was to establish Norman rule and a series of castles were built, including Arundel. The Battle of Lewes in 1264 was one of the key events in the War of the Barons

which led to the first representative Parliament in England. The battle site is designated as a site of national significance.



*All Saints Church, East Meon is one of a number of churches with nationally significant important medieval features © Adrian White*

The evidence for the medieval use of the countryside can still be seen today. Areas of medieval royal or lordly hunts (such as Woolmer Forest) survive. The greensand soils were good for grazing and many still survive as commons. Other aspects of the landscape such as field hedges as boundaries, water meadows and river bridges survive in some places.

Many of the villages of the National Park have parish churches that were built soon after the Norman conquest. These churches were not just for prayer but were the centre of village life. In some cases the church is all that is left of a village, where people have moved or farming practices changed. Churches are a particularly significant part of the National Park's cultural heritage with 167 parish churches being listed buildings. Some are particularly important because of their wall paintings and so are of national significance.

The demographic changes in the smaller settlements coupled with the national decline in attendance at church, is leaving communities struggling to raise funds to keep church buildings in good condition.

Churches and churchyards are also important habitats for some species (eg bats) and are also potential sites for learning about places, people, wildlife and geology.



#### Key facts: Medieval buildings at risk

**Heritage at Risk Register:** While the Heritage At Risk register does not include any medieval archaeological site it does include six medieval buildings, four of which are churches.

### Post-medieval

England's only Civil War included a battle at Cheriton and this battlefield is on the register of battlefields as of national significance.

The sale of monastic lands and properties by Henry VIII led to an increase in the number of estates owned by yeoman farmers and the aristocracy. This, together with a decline in the sport of deer hunting, led to the creation of many new parks and gardens. As fashions in garden design changed many were reshaped and important garden designers continued to work in the National Park area in the early 20th century including a number of Arts and Crafts gardens at King Edward VII hospital at Easebourne. There are 30 parks and gardens listed as being nationally significant and there are local lists researched by the two County Gardens Trusts<sup>105</sup> that identify important sites local planning authorities can take account of.

Many of the larger parks and gardens were part of 'great estates' – owned and inherited by many generations of the same family. Such estate owners often

<sup>105</sup> The National Park is served by the Sussex Gardens Trust (see [www.sussexgardenstrust.org.uk](http://www.sussexgardenstrust.org.uk)) and the Hampshire Gardens Trust (see [www.hgt.org.uk](http://www.hgt.org.uk)). Both are voluntary organisations that help to conserve and increase understanding of these important assets. They also advise owners and comment on planning applications

owned lands in other parts of Britain and brought to the area new ideas on agricultural improvements, model farms and breeds of sheep and cattle to meet local conditions and maximise income. These estates were centred on great houses, many of which survive today – although sometimes in other uses or in the ownership of the National Trust.

The period after the 1540s saw many changes in religion within Britain and the growth of nonconformist churches and chapels, in particular after 1660. From 1830, it was again legal to build Roman Catholic churches. There are four Catholic churches that are listed buildings and one former Quaker meeting house – other nonconformist chapels are not currently listed.

## Industrial history

The post-medieval industrial archaeology of the National Park has been studied in only the last 30 years or so. Raw materials dug from the Western Weald were used in iron and glass making industries which were nationally important in the medieval and Tudor periods. The casting of iron continued to be a local industry in Lewes into the 20th century. The other major industry seen in the landscape is the quarrying of chalk and sands. Some of these remains have been scheduled as being of national importance.



**Key facts:** Post-medieval sites at risk

**Heritage at Risk Register:** There are two industrial archaeological sites, three buildings and two parks and gardens of the post-medieval period on the Register.

Some of the chalk was burnt in lime kilns to produce lime for treating the soil or for making mortar and white bricks. Improving the soil was one aspect of the great agricultural improvements of the 18th century.

## World War I and II

The nearby ports of Portsmouth and Southampton were very important for transporting troops and infrastructure to Europe and so large numbers of troops with their equipment camped and trained on the South Downs and on

the heaths. There were also significant defensive installations along the coastline and valleys to guard against invasion and enemy aircraft. There are many signs of this history still in the landscape together with many photographs and recordings of people's memories of these times. Twelve war memorials within the National Park are listed buildings. At present none of these sites has been scheduled.



*Spitfires over the South Downs during World War II © Imperial War Museum*

## Buildings

### Building materials

Historic buildings were usually constructed from materials quarried, gathered and hewn nearby. Roads were poor, especially in winter, and although boats were useful for shifting heavy materials such as stone, navigable rivers do not flow everywhere. Most people had no choice but to build with the materials they had near at hand, timber from the woods and forests of the weald, stone from local quarries and delves, flints gathered from the chalk downs and local

clays won to mould bricks and tiles. This sheer variety of materials reflects the underlying geology of the landscape and is one of the great joys of the distinctive architecture of the National Park.



Lombard Street, Petworth © Anne Bone/SDNPA

Over time some of these sources became depleted. For example: hardwoods were in demand for charcoal-making and shipbuilding; and Scandinavian softwoods began to supplement them for construction in the 18th century. With the arrival of the railways, the predominance of the local roofing materials, clay tile, Horsham stone tiles and thatch, was challenged by the blue slates of North Wales. But unlike many parts of Britain, in rural Hampshire and Sussex these new sources of building material never entirely superseded the traditional choices. They often added yet another layer of diversity to the fascinating mix already in evidence.

## Building designations

The relative importance of historic buildings is indicated by the grade of their listing. The designation of listed buildings was first undertaken in the 1950s and 1960s and has been revised in more detail in almost all of the country, one of the exceptions being Sussex (including Brighton and Hove).<sup>106</sup>

Table 7.1 Listed buildings within the National Park\*

Description	No. in National Park
Grade I	152
Grade II*	221
Grade II	4,798
Total in National Park	5,171

\* One entry can include more than one building (and a building can be sub-divided during its use).



We would like to know about the historic building recording work by local groups and other organisations. We can use this to identify areas where there is no research or recording taking place.

<sup>106</sup> The Sussex lists are accepted by English Heritage as not being of the same quality as Hampshire – English Heritage now prefers to revise the lists in areas smaller than a whole county and where the need is greatest

## Farm buildings

There are 792 listed farm buildings<sup>107</sup>, including 424 farmhouses although not all of these buildings are necessarily being used now in farming.

### Box 7.2 Types and current condition of listed buildings

#### Grade I buildings of outstanding importance.

Most of the Grade I buildings in the National Park are parish churches. Of the 12 buildings within the National Park on the Heritage At Risk register, four are Grade I: Two of these are houses (or remains of houses), one is a church and one is the remains of a monastery.

#### Grade II\* buildings are of more than special interest.

This group is primarily houses of varying scale. These buildings are fairly distributed evenly across the National Park area. There are six Grade II\* buildings on the Heritage at Risk register – four are parish churches, one is a hospital chapel and one is the ruins of a former church.

#### Grade II buildings are of special architectural or historical interest.

Over three-quarters of this group are houses (including farmhouses). The remainder includes shops, barns, pubs and features such as dovecotes, telephone boxes and mills. Grade II buildings are located in almost every settlement across the National Park and there are large numbers in the four historic towns.<sup>108</sup>

Grade II sites are not included in the national Heritage at Risk register so the National Park Authority is commissioning a survey in 2012/13. This will then be the basis for measuring change in the condition of the listed buildings of the National Park.

Some of the local authorities in the National Park area have had local lists of other important buildings which the National Park Authority has inherited.

<sup>107</sup> For more information on listed buildings visit the English Heritage website <http://list.english-heritage.org.uk>

<sup>108</sup> The four historic towns are Petersfield, Midhurst, Petworth and Lewes. These towns are defined as 'historic' by English Heritage and were all included in a national programme known as 'Extensive Urban Surveys'. These surveys help to inform our understanding and are an important tool in considering planning applications in these towns

## Schools

There are a number of listed school buildings in the National Park. The most important purpose-built school is Lancing College. Two other secondary and 10 primary schools use buildings that are listed. Schools have been an important part of the past usage of some stately homes, particularly during World War II. Some historic buildings now have a viable future as they are occupied by schools, such as Seaford College – which transferred to Lavington Park in 1946.

## Houses

There are 48 listed 'country houses' which are the larger houses at the heart of estates. Some, such as Petworth House, would be viewed as 'stately homes' while others are more modest. Most are now managed as charitable trusts and some are open to the public.

Petworth House is one of the National Trust's houses in the National Park and is especially significant for its art collections.

Most of the listed houses in the National Park are more homely in scale. In some parts of the National Park timber-framed houses are more common – this is especially notable in the Chichester District. This reflects the availability of timber as a building material on the wooded downs and in the Western Weald, and the survival of buildings from before 1800. There are 272<sup>109</sup> timber-framed listed buildings in the National Park.



For more information on listed buildings visit <http://list.english-heritage.org.uk>

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid*



Petworth House, Petworth © NTPL/David Levenson

## Settlements

Each of the three historic market towns within the National Park – Petersfield, Midhurst and Lewes – has a distinctive character and a strong sense of place. All have large numbers of listed buildings and Conservation Areas (see below). Within these historic towns the design of new buildings, open spaces and infrastructure is important.

There are also many villages and hamlets within the National Park. Most villages have not been studied to find out how they have grown, apart from a group in Hampshire in a County Council supported study.<sup>110</sup> As villages undertake local planning exercises it would be very useful to share the results and analyse them across the National Park.

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<sup>110</sup> Hampshire County Council/Bournemouth University, *The Historical Rural Settlement Study*, Unpublished study



### We need data on villages and hamlets.

The best measure of the significance of the historic parts of settlements is the existence of Conservation Areas. These are defined by the local planning authority and provide certain protections and constraints on change and development. To be effective, the designation of a Conservation Area should also include the development of an appraisal. To guide future changes, and to produce positive benefits, a Conservation Area Management Plan is required. Both should be updated once every ten years.

There are 166 Conservation Areas within the National Park, created by the local authorities before the National Park was in place. There are nine Conservation Areas on the Heritage at Risk register – all except one are in Hampshire. However, not all local authorities report on Conservation Areas at risk so this data may be skewed and missing in other places.

### Heritage at risk

The annual national survey by English Heritage of the condition of heritage sites is called 'Heritage at Risk'. (See Table 7.2 for 2011 figures and Key Data Box at the end of the chapter for further information). The National Park has been included in this report for the first time in 2011 and the results are summarised in Table 7.2.

**Table 7.2** Heritage at risk<sup>†</sup>

	Number in the National Park	Number on Heritage at Risk register 2011	% of National Park sites at risk
Scheduled Monuments	616	50 <sup>†</sup>	8.1
Parks and Gardens	30	2	6.7
Battlefields	2	0	0
Listed Buildings:			
Grade I	37	4 <sup>†</sup>	10.8
Grade II*	203	5	2.46
Grade II	4431	See note	
Conservation Areas	166	9	5.42
Non-designated:			
Monuments	7401		
Find-spots	6286		

<sup>†</sup>Two scheduled monuments are also listed buildings so are double-counted in this table.

Note: A survey of Grade II buildings is being undertaken in 2012/13 and this will allow the number that are ‘at risk’ to be identified for the first time.

## Heritage collections

An important part of the heritage of the National Park is held in a variety of collections which are looked after, open to the public and used for research. This includes objects held by museums and art galleries, and archives held in record offices. The National Park has a number of ‘heritage sites’ that are open to visitors which preserve heritage and play an important role in tourism. Local residents and visitors can also experience the works of past authors, poets and composers at venues and festivals within the National Park.

The most important heritage collections are those that have been designated under a government scheme.<sup>111</sup> There are also 34 heritage collections across the National Park under the national Accreditation Scheme including museums, archives and heritage sites. There is no monitoring of the condition of designated or accredited collections.

There are many other collections in museums, galleries, libraries and archives that hold works depicting the National Park.<sup>112</sup>



[For more information on the collections.](#)

## Other heritage sites

As mentioned elsewhere in the report, there are many other heritage sites open to visitors to the National Park, such as Petworth House.



[For more information on other heritage sites.](#)

<sup>111</sup> Hampshire Record Office (Winchester) – for its entire holdings; Royal Pavilion and Museums, Brighton and Hove – four collections designated but the relevant one is the Booth Museum of Natural History; and Weald & Downland Open Air Museum – for its entire holdings.; MLA ‘Designated Collections List

<sup>112</sup> The Towner gallery at Eastbourne has important collections of landscape inspired works and Pallant House Gallery in Chichester. Archaeological collections are held at Winchester City; Hampshire County including Alton; Chichester District; Worthing; Horsham; Brighton; and Museum of Sussex Archaeology, Lewes. Booth Museum, Brighton; and Hampshire County Museum service

There are also heritage sites that are associated with famous writers, poets, natural historians, composers or artists, for example: Jane Austen House, Chawton; Gilbert White House and Oates Museum, Selborne and Charleston farmhouse, Firle.



*Jane Austen's House Museum at Chawton © Jane Austen's House Museum*

### Conserving the historic environment

In the last 15 years there has been significant Heritage Lottery Fund investment in the historic environment of the National Park. This has included major capital schemes as well as community projects. A number of schemes are currently in development.

The agri-environment schemes (see Chapters 2 and 5) have also provided significant funding to take archaeological features out of cultivation and to conserve historic farmsteads.

English Heritage has undertaken a survey of the traditional building craft skills which shows there is a shortage of skilled people to maintain locally distinctive buildings.

### Cultural life

Much of the cultural life of the South Downs and Western Weald is intimately connected to its landscapes, both real and imagined, and its sense of place.

**“With 19th century urbanisation the rhythmically rolling Downs came to be regarded as peculiarly and beguilingly English, the landscape of dreams... In the English arts and crafts world the Downs had a special resonance and they became a major part of a national identity for an urban society with a taste for Old England, nostalgically harking back to a past rural idyll. For these various reasons the Downs became world renowned as a focus of English culture.”<sup>113</sup>**

For these reasons, the National Park contains a great variety of cultural activity and this report can only record the most significant features. The National Park is a place of inspiration for composers, writers, musicians, poets and artists – there are so many that only the most significant are mentioned here:

- Edward Elgar found fresh inspiration after the darkness of World War I and wrote the Cello concerto whilst living near Fittleworth.
- The words to ‘Jerusalem’ are from one of the poems of William Blake, allegedly inspired by the view of the South Downs from Lavant.
- Turner spent many summers at Petworth House where the Earl had a special studio built for him, to capture the best of the light.
- Eric Gill was a leading artist who settled at Ditchling and attracted a community of other artists and craft makers.
- The most important author associated with the National Park is Jane Austen, several of whose major works were written when she lived at Chawton.

<sup>113</sup> Brandon, P (1998) *The South Downs*, Phillimore and Co Ltd

There are three 'cultural strategies' within the National Park, developed by the three county councils. They are a useful summary of the priorities for cultural development in and beyond the area of the National Park.<sup>114</sup>



Eric Ravilious was often inspired by the Downs and many of his works are in the Towner at Eastbourne including the 'Downs in Winter' © Towner Art Gallery

114 County Cultural Strategies/Sustainable/Hampshire County Council (2008) *Sustainable Communities Strategy 2008–2018*; West Sussex County Council *Cultural Strategy 2009–2014*; East Sussex County Council *Cultural Strategy 2008*, Hampshire County Council

## Traditions

The long history of settlement of the South Downs and Western Weald has led to long-lived traditions. It is now hard to imagine how people lived – although literature such as *Cold Comfort Farm* can give us some idea of life on the South Downs in the 1930s.

The value of this area as a repository for tradition can be seen in the activities of folk music collectors such as the Broadwoods (an uncle and his niece who performed around Horsham) or classical musicians such as Ralph Vaughan Williams or Percy Grainger. Many folk songs were also collected from the travelling community at the Taro Fair in Petersfield. While some songs continued as living traditions in families such as the Coppers (once shepherds and later publicans) others have been captured on recordings or transcribed as sheet music and so are available to singers today. Maintaining a body of people who know and sing traditional songs is the aim of the 'Songs of the South Downs' project.<sup>115</sup>

Throughout the nation bonfire night is still marked traditionally with bonfires and fireworks – but the best known celebration is undoubtedly Lewes, attended by up to 60,000 people.

Traditionally the agricultural year was marked by a series of events linked to the farming year and to the need to buy and sell produce and hire labour. The Taro Fair in Petersfield was started in 1820 as a cattle fair but became the biggest horse-selling fair in south-east England in the 1920s and 1930s. Traditional fairs still continue in other towns. Ebernoe's Horn Fair was revived as a tradition in 1865 and is held annually when, after a cricket match, the best cricketer is given the horns from the sheep being roasted for the feast that closes the day's events.

An important part of English rural life that started in the area is the Women's Institute which campaigned to raise the quality of life in rural areas. Its first meeting in England was in the village of Charlton, West Sussex in 1915.

115 The South Downs Songs Project is run by The South Downs Society. Workshops explore different themes e.g. love and work, and set them in their historical context

# Key data: Well-conserved historical features and a rich cultural heritage



## Listed buildings and archaeology sites

The National Park Authority, working with our partners, will monitor listed buildings and archaeology sites.

Heritage information is held as a database called the Historic Environment Record (HER) by local authorities. Information has been compiled to the National Park boundary.

Every year English Heritage compiles a report on the sites that are 'At Risk' of loss of their historic information or fabric – this is primarily compiled from reports received and so may not include all sites at risk. No Grade II buildings are included in this survey which is a major gap in our knowledge. Conservation Areas are reported at the discretion of local authorities but as not all councils have officers doing this work it may not represent the whole picture.

It will be possible to monitor the number of sites that are 'At Risk' each year and so this can be an indicator of the extent to which the historic environment is 'well conserved':

- **Key data:** Heritage at Risk.
- **Current position:** As in Table 7.2 'Heritage at Risk'.
- **Data source:** English Heritage (2011) *Heritage at Risk*, English Heritage
- **Responsibility for data collection:** English Heritage and local authorities.

## Taking part in cultural heritage

The National Park Authority, working with our partners, will monitor participation in cultural activities.

There is a national survey called 'Taking Part', run for the Dept of Culture, Media and Sport, which attempts to calculate how many people visit museums or attend arts events. It is broken down by district/borough council area and cannot therefore easily be adjusted to National Park boundaries. Currently there is no count of the number of people engaged in the cultural heritage of the National Park. This would include people visiting sites and events, taking part in projects, the membership of local societies, or learning activities and volunteering:

- **Key data:** Involvement in cultural heritage activities.
- **Current position:** Unknown.
- Gathering all this information would be a very useful exercise but will require assistance and support from a variety of groups and organisations – assistance would be gratefully received.



We need data on the number of people engaged in cultural heritage activities.



## Chapter 8

# DISTINCTIVE TOWNS AND VILLAGES, AND COMMUNITIES WITH REAL PRIDE IN THEIR AREA

The South Downs National Park is the most populated National Park in the United Kingdom, with around 110,000 people living within the boundary. Significantly more people live in the major urban areas and villages that surround the National Park including communities that are actively involved in the South Downs such as Brighton and Hove, and Eastbourne.

The South Downs is unique in having the largest market towns of any UK National Park – Lewes, Petersfield and Midhurst. The character and appearance of these and many other settlements throughout the National Park derives in large part from the distinctive local building materials. Picturesque villages like Selborne, Charlton and Alfriston blend into their landscapes.

Many of these settlements contain strong and vibrant communities with much invested in the future of where they live, and a sense of identity with their local area, its culture and history. Across the National Park there are also communities of people who come together through common interests, for example, farming, conservation and recreation. These communities dedicate time and resources to enhancing community life, conserving what is important to them and planning for future generations.<sup>116</sup>

<sup>116</sup> South Downs National Park Authority (2011) *Special Qualities of the South Downs National Park*, SDNPA

This chapter looks at the population of the National Park in detail and describes the current situation on housing, fuel poverty and rural crime. It also focuses on services available to local communities and the active involvement of people in community life.

### Census data 2001

The majority of data used to compile this section of the report has been taken from the 2001 census results. When data was collected for the 2001 census, the South Downs National Park did not exist as a statistical geography. There are, therefore, no accurate census datasets for the National Park area. As data could not be collected to the National Park boundary a 33 per cent threshold formula has been used. Essentially for data available at certain geographies (LSOA, ward level etc.), a 33 per cent population threshold has been applied to provide an estimate value for the National Park. This means where LSOA or wards are split by the National Park boundary, the whole of the LSOA or ward is included as being part of the National Park statistics if more than 33 per cent of that LSOA or ward population falls within the National Park boundary. This applies to Output Areas, Lower Super Output Areas, Middle Super Output Areas and Wards.

All forecast data (mid-year population estimates etc) has also been calculated using the same formula. Although the data is the most accurate available it should be noted that there will be some inaccuracy. The 2011 census results will be available for the National Park area so this will provide a more accurate position for the topics within this chapter. It is expected that the majority of 2011 census data will be available in 2012–13.

### Box 8.1 ONS category definitions

Terminology	Definition
<b>Output Areas</b>	<p><b>Minimum population:</b> 100 (approximately)  <b>Recommended population:</b> 300</p> <p>2001 Census Output Areas were built from clusters of adjacent postcodes which have similar characteristics (tenure of housing, dwelling type etc).  They had approximately regular shapes and tended to be constrained by obvious boundaries such as major roads.  They were designed to have similar population sizes and be as socially homogenous as possible.  Using the 33 per cent population threshold there are 384 Output Areas in the National Park area.</p>
<b>Lower Super Output Area</b>	<p><b>Minimum population:</b> 1,000  <b>Average population:</b> 1,500</p> <p>Made up of groups of Output areas (typically five).  Constrained by the boundaries of electoral wards used for 2001 Census outputs.  Using the 33 per cent population threshold there are 70 LSOAs in the National Park area.</p>
<b>Middle Super Output Area</b>	<p><b>Minimum population:</b> 5,000  <b>Average population:</b> 7,200</p> <p>Made up of groups of Lower Super Output Areas.  Constrained by the 2003 local authority boundaries used for 2001 Census outputs.  Using the 33 per cent population threshold there are 17 MSOAs in the National Park area.</p>
<b>Wards (electoral wards)</b>	<p>Population can vary dramatically, English average 5,500</p> <p>Electoral wards are the areas defined to elect local councillors.  A specific area of a district or borough defined for electoral, administrative or representational purposes.</p>

## The population of the National Park and its surrounding areas

The population of the National Park is estimated to have increased by 3 per cent over the period between 2002 to 2009, this is an increase of approximately 3,000 people. Figure 8.1 shows how this increase in population has been slower than that in the south east of England where the population has increased by 5 per cent in the same period.

### Key facts: Population

- Around 110,400 people live in the National Park (2009).
- 1.97 million people live in the 16 local authority areas which intersect with the 5km boundary of the National Park. This is known as the 'Wider National Park Buffer'.<sup>117</sup>
- The population density in the south east is 440 people per km<sup>2</sup> but the population density in the National Park is 67 people per km<sup>2</sup>.
- In Petersfield, Midhurst and Lewes the population is much more concentrated than the rest of the National Park, with a density above the regional average although this is still relatively low compared to the urban areas surrounding it.<sup>118</sup>

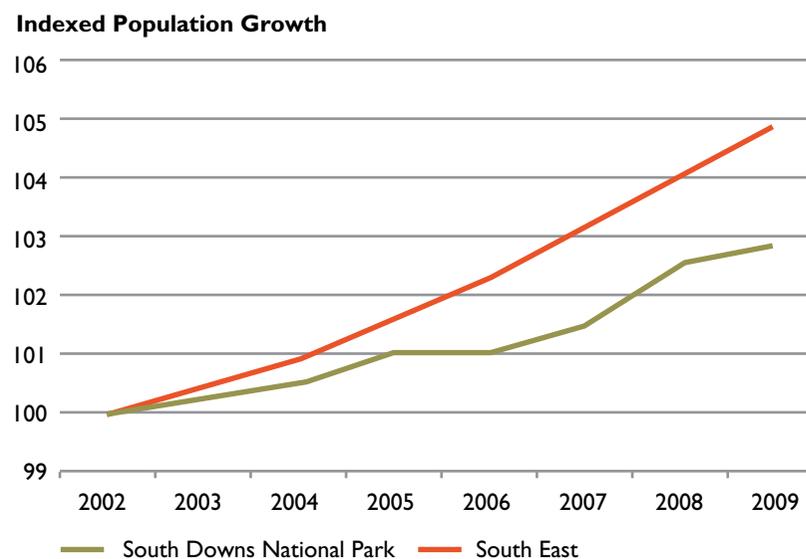
Although other national parks include small market towns, the South Downs National Park has two major settlements in Lewes and Petersfield with populations of 15,998 and 13,303 (Census 2001) respectively. This compares to the next largest settlement population in a national park (Brecon in the Brecon Beacons with a population of 7,901). The market towns, including Midhurst, and the larger villages provide a vital service to the surrounding rural communities, through community services such as banking, post offices, secondary schools and shopping facilities, and access to the public transport network operating throughout the National Park.

<sup>117</sup> See Map 5.1 of the buffer zone

<sup>118</sup> Hampshire County Council (2011) *South Downs National Park Local Economy: Current Economic Indicators for the Local Economy of the South Downs National Park*, Hampshire County Council

The major urban settlements surrounding the National Park also play an important role in the provision of services, housing and transport for rural communities in the National Park.

**Figure 8.1** Population growth in the National Park compared with the south east (2002–09)\*



**Note:** \*This graph shows indexed population growth – a means of comparing relative growth across the south east and the South Downs National Park. This is not a comparison of population totals.

**Source:** Office for National Statistics (2009) *Mid year population estimates*, Office for National Statistics

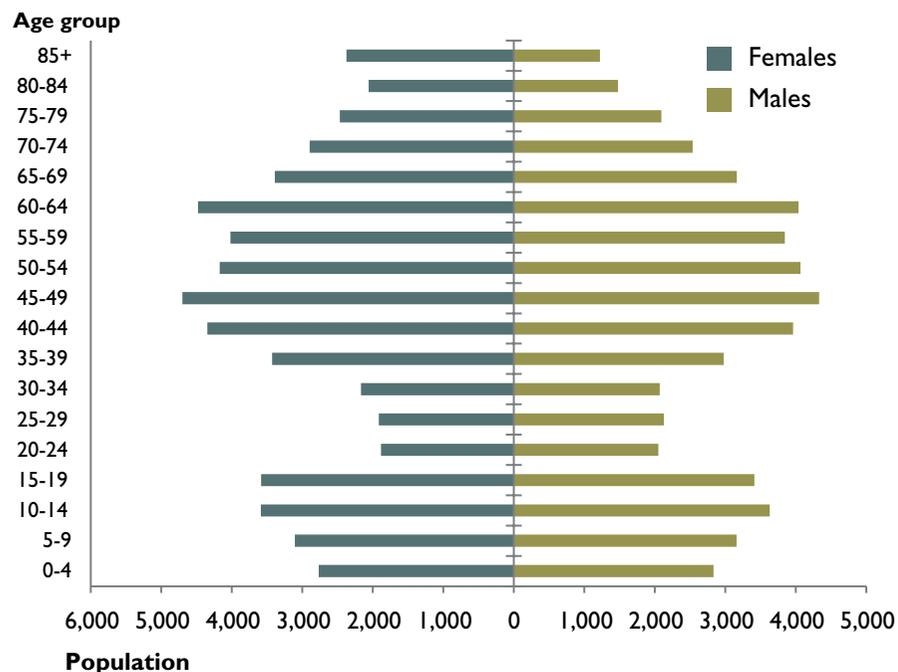
## Population age

The age structure of a population can provide a good indicator of the sustainability of a community, with an ageing population relying more heavily on

services and a decreasing working age population impacting on the availability of people to fill local jobs and provide vital services.

The population age structure of the National Park in Figure 8.2 shows a lower number of young people and a higher proportion of people aged 40–65 years old.

**Figure 8.2** Population age structure of the South Downs National Park



Source: Office for National Statistics (2009) *Mid year population estimates*, Office for National Statistics

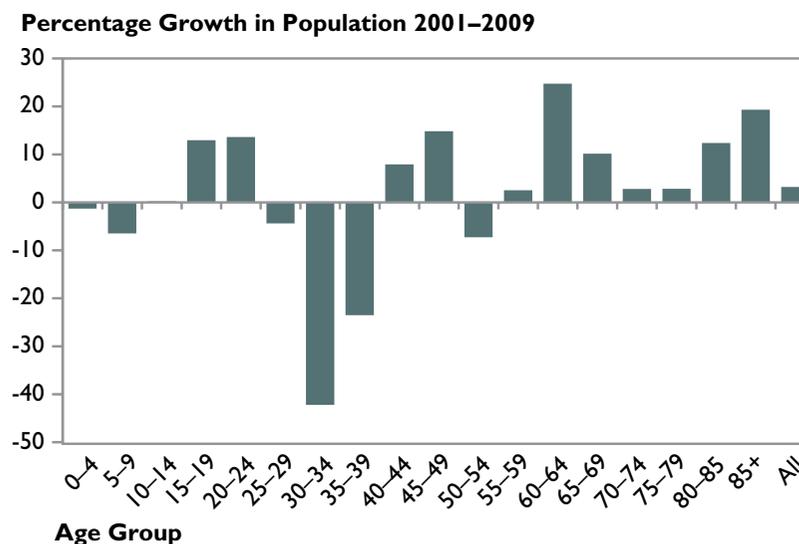
While the total population of the National Park is estimated to have grown by 3 per cent over the last decade, the young and working age population has remained relatively static compared with the south east average increase of 5 per cent. Based on 2009 figures, of the total population of the National Park:

- around 17 per cent are children under 14; (16 in south east);

- 21 per cent are aged 65 and over (17 in the south east); and
- the remaining 62 per cent is the working age population aged 15–64 (65 in the south east).<sup>119</sup>

Figure 8.3 provides a more detailed breakdown of the age of the National Park’s population. It shows an increase in people aged 65 and over and a reduction of those in their thirties.

**Figure 8.3** Percentage growth in population by age<sup>120</sup>



Source: Office for National Statistics (2009) *Mid year population estimates*, Office for National Statistics

<sup>119</sup> Hampshire County Council (2011) *South Downs National Park Local Economy: Current Economic Indicators for the Local Economy of the South Downs National Park*, Hampshire County Council

<sup>120</sup> The largest increase between 2001 and 2009 was recorded for those aged 60–64 (26 per cent), with increases also recorded in the over 85 (17 per cent), 45–49 group (14 per cent) and those aged 80–85 (11 per cent). This reinforces the National Park’s population bias towards older people. The largest decrease was recorded in those aged 30–34 (-39 per cent) and 35–39 (-19 per cent). The population aged 15–19 increased by 12 per cent, which might be associated with the increase in those aged 45–49 as family households

The population of the National Park is therefore ageing, although this mirrors the national trend. The number of people aged over 65 is significantly higher in percentage terms than found in the south east as a whole, though this will be a common pattern in many rural areas.



*Walking on Old Winchester Hill © Anne Purkiss*

## Where people live in the National Park

Map 8.1 shows the population distribution in the National Park and its immediate surroundings. The map clearly shows that population density is relatively low in the rural areas of the National Park with higher density of population in the market towns and the urban conurbations surrounding the boundary.

## Economic and social circumstances of the National Park population

While the largest proportion of the National Park's population is relatively well off, there are areas in or around the main market towns with lower incomes and greater unemployment.<sup>121</sup>

The high price of housing in the National Park often means that:

- people on lower incomes are unable to live in the National Park and must travel into it for employment;
- employers face challenges in finding appropriately qualified staff; and
- there is more traffic on the roads within the National Park as people travel to and from work.

Socio-economic information provides a picture of communities based on various characteristics such as age and ethnicity, household composition and type, qualifications, employment status and employment by industry.

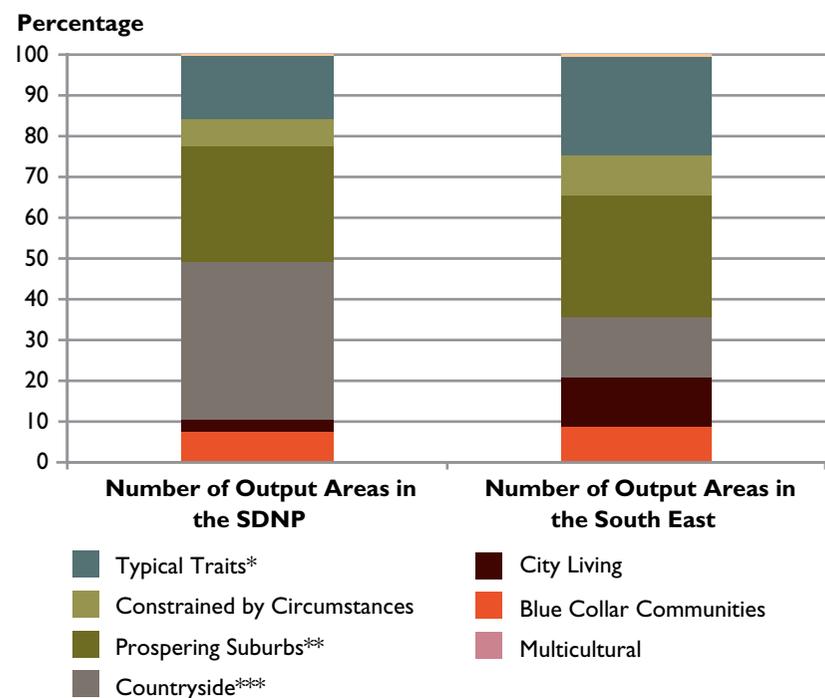
### For the distribution of socio-economic characteristics of households in the National Park.

Figure 8.4 shows a comparison of social structures within the National Park and the south east region. With the exception of the high proportion of countryside and low proportion of city living, the National Park is similar in social structure to the rest of the south east. Perhaps more apparent is the under representation of multicultural communities. However, this is generally the case in most rural areas in the south east. The barriers preventing minority groups accessing the National Park are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

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<sup>121</sup> Hampshire County Council (2011) *South Downs National Park Local Economy: Current Economic Indicators for the Local Economy of the South Downs National Park*, Hampshire County Council

**Figure 8.4** Comparison of the socio-economic characteristics between the National Park and the south east



\* The typical traits category are those working in a wide range of industries, living mainly in terraced housing which is either owner occupied or privately rented. This category has a mix of ethnic backgrounds and household incomes.

\*\* The prospering suburbs category are those working in a professional or semi-professional capacity, living in detached homes, mostly privately owned with older children or children who have left home. They are generally prosperous people who have established themselves in the workplace.

\*\*\* The countryside category are well off individuals living in rural or semi rural locations, mostly living in detached housing, working in agriculture or a professional capacity and often working from home.

In addition to the socio-economic structure of the National Park the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) provide information on deprivation or poverty.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation combines a number of indicators, chosen to cover a range of economic, social and housing issues, into a single deprivation score for each small area in England. This allows each area to be ranked relative to one another according to their level of deprivation. The Index of Multiple Deprivation covers the following seven fields:

- Income Deprivation
- Employment Deprivation
- Health and Disability Deprivation
- Education and Skills Deprivation
- Barriers to Services and Housing Deprivation
- Crime Deprivation
- Living Environment Deprivation



For more information on the IMD scores for the National Park and IMD maps for each deprivation category.

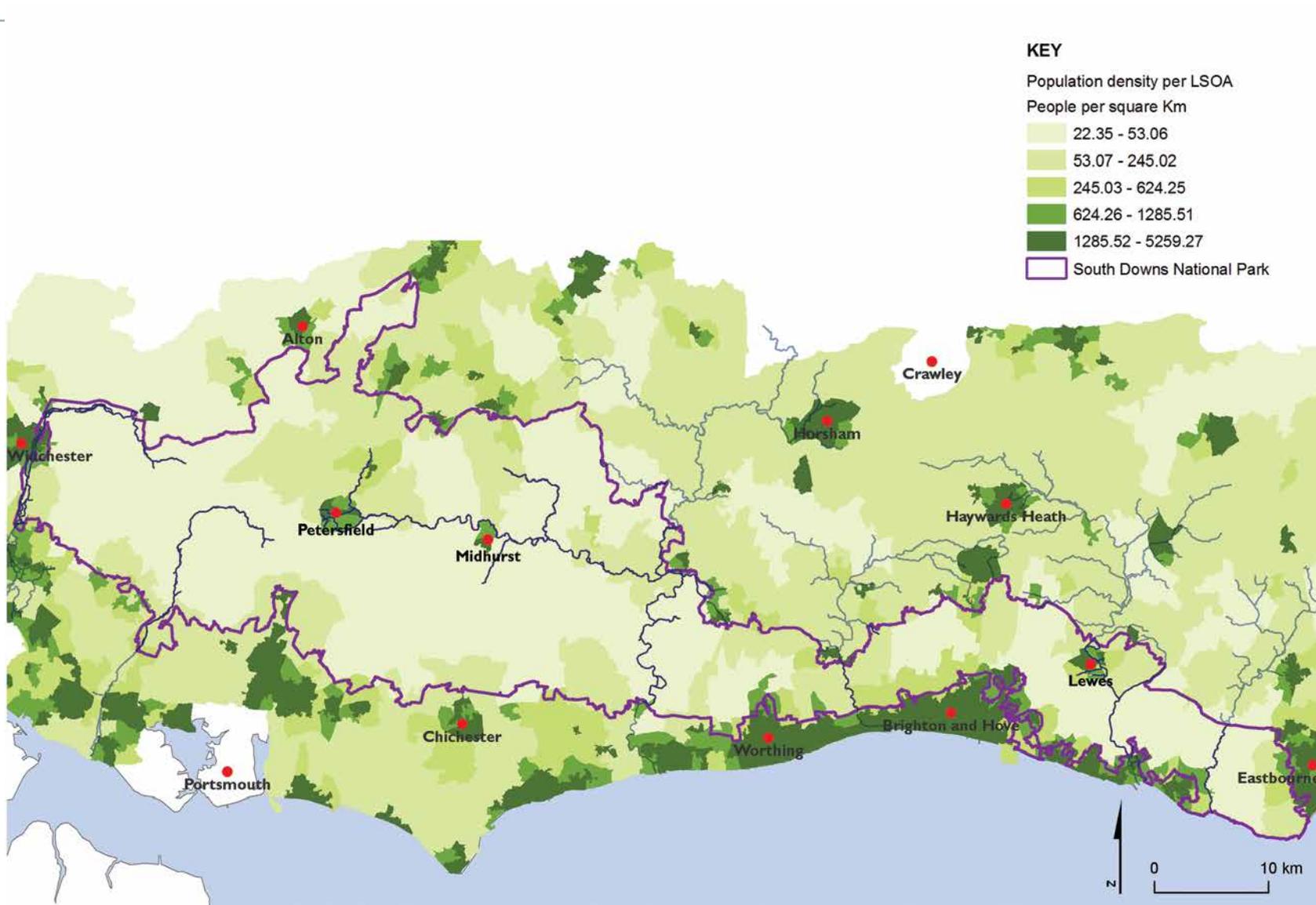
## Map 8.1

Population distribution within the National Park

Maps prepared by:  
GeoSpec, University of  
Brighton; February 2012.

Source: The Department  
for Communities and  
Local Government, 2010

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Map 8.2 shows how the Indices of Multiple Deprivation are represented across the National Park. Areas of deprivation tend to occur near urban areas or in areas around the main market towns. The majority of the National Park is in the 20 per cent least deprived areas of England. Concentrated deprivation primarily exists in urban areas associated with large social housing estates, often on the fringes of major cities or towns. Most deprivation is therefore found to the south of the National Park in Brighton and Hove, Worthing and Littlehampton, with pockets in other coastal towns such as Hayling Island, Bognor Regis and Eastbourne. The dark green areas on Map 8.2 highlight the most deprived areas in the south east and, although some of those areas extend into the National Park, closer examination suggests that most deprivation is actually located in the urban areas just outside of the National Park boundary.

It should be noted that IMD data is collected and analysed at Lower Super Output Area. Because of the size of populations represented in each LSOA (1,500 persons on average), localised deprivation, especially in rural areas, is likely to be hidden and averaged out by a greater number of wealthier neighbourhoods. Therefore, it is likely that there are instances of deprivation in the National Park which are not highlighted by the IMD data.

### **Gypsy and traveller communities**

The information available about the number of existing sites, the number of new sites required and records of any illegal encampments is currently (and historically) collected by the district and county councils (Bi-annual Caravan Count published by DCLG). This information does not separate out those inside the National Park and those outside. The nomadic lifestyle of the gypsy and traveller communities makes it difficult to collect information on how many new sites are needed within the National Park. We are working jointly with partners/adjoining local authorities to gather data which will indicate the level of need within the National Park boundary. As well as this the 2011 Census included 'Gypsy and Traveller' as an additional category within the section on ethnic groups. The Census information will be cut to the National Park boundary and therefore should provide further useful information.

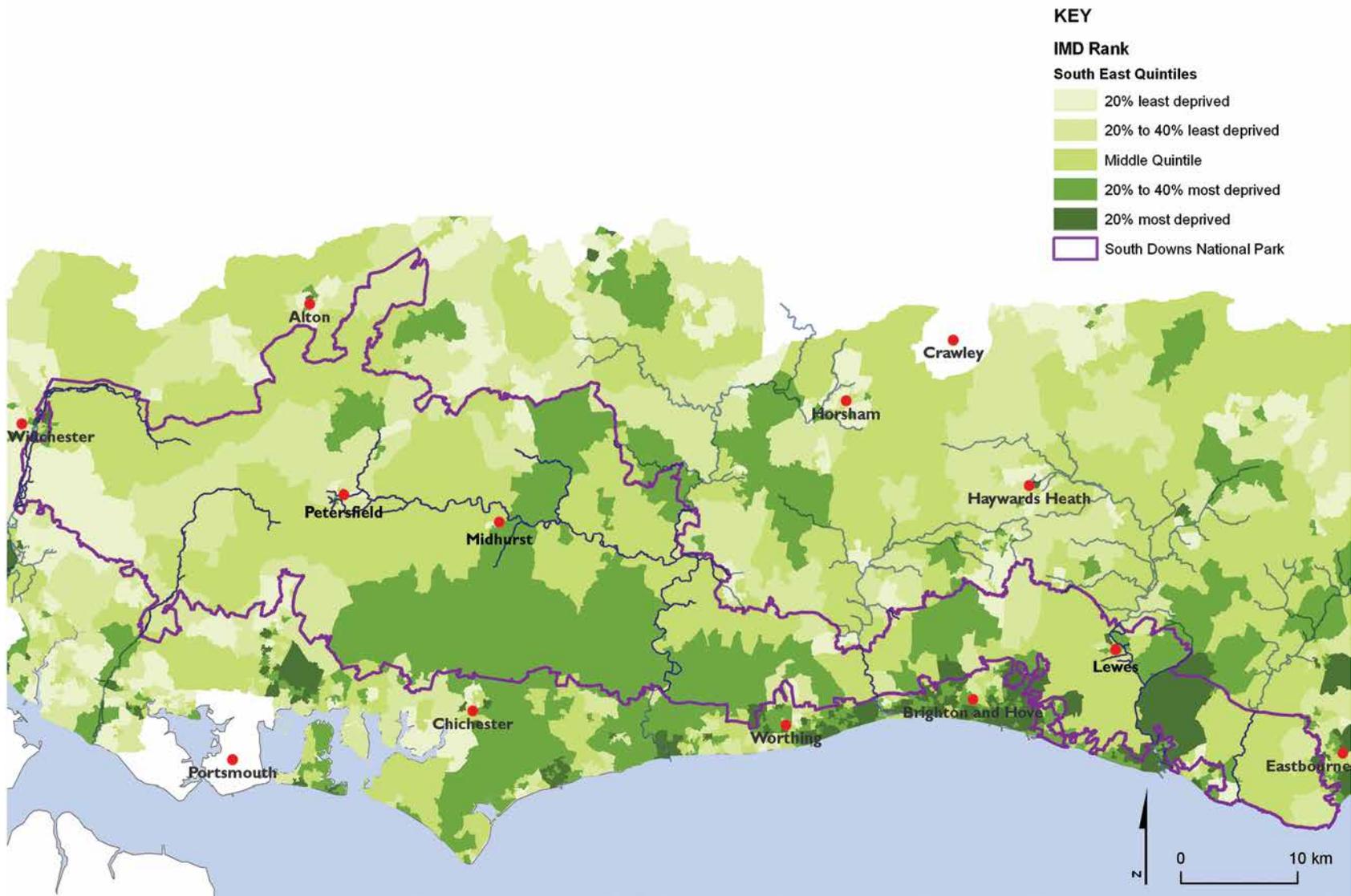
## Map 8.2

### Index of Multiple Deprivation

Maps prepared by:  
GeoSpec, University of  
Brighton; May 2012.

Source: The Department  
for Communities and  
Local Government, 2010

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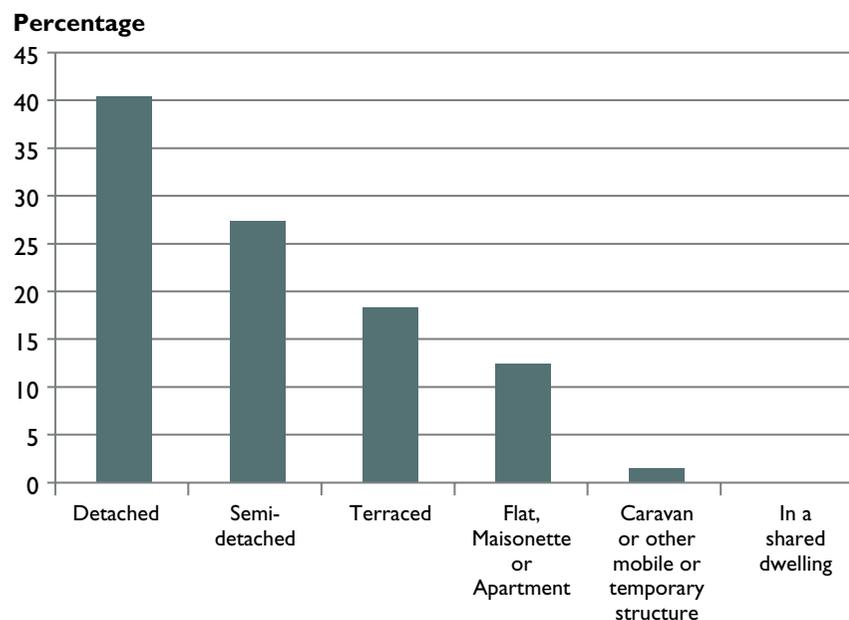


## Housing

The comparatively large population of the National Park creates challenges in finding places for people to continue to live in it without impacting on its special qualities.

### Housing types and prices

Figure 8.5 Housing Types



Source: Office for National Statistics (2001) *Census 2001*, Office for National Statistics

The high number of larger homes is a factor in the high average house prices that characterise the area and therefore the difficulty those on average or lower incomes have in buying their own homes.

Map 8.3 shows how house prices vary (using average house prices of houses sold Jan–June 2011).<sup>122</sup> The map clearly shows how lower priced housing is mainly found along the south coast and the southern boundary of the National Park.

### Key facts: Housing

- There are roughly 50,000 homes in the National Park (2001).
- 40 per cent detached.
- 27 per cent semi-detached.
- House prices are highest in the western part of the National Park – in the Winchester City, East Hampshire and Chichester Districts.
- There is a significant difference in price between the towns and their surrounding rural areas in the National Park. The average rural house price is £400,300, while in the towns it is £265,400.

### Affordability

The 'affordability ratio' indicates how many average annual salaries (national average) it costs to buy an average priced house (national average) in a given area. In 2010 the average English ratio was 7.0, while the south east region was 8.2. Eastbourne Borough is the only area in the National Park where houses are closer to the national average (at 7.1). The other 11 districts have a much lower housing affordability for residents of:

- East Hampshire – 11 times the average annual salary;
- Chichester – 10.5 times the average annual salary; and
- Winchester – 10.2 times the average annual salary.

<sup>122</sup> Based on Land Registry data

In general, housing is more affordable outside the National Park to the south in places such as Worthing, Eastleigh and Havant, whereas to the north it is far higher, reflecting proximity to London and the M25 corridor.<sup>123</sup>

With relatively high house prices and jobs that tend to be lower paid, it can be difficult for people to live and work in the National Park. This impacts on the availability of people to fill lower paid jobs and means increased traffic moving through the National Park. (See the Transport Fact File for more information.)

 For a detailed picture of housing affordability across the National Park.

### Household composition

The household composition of the National Park is broadly similar to the south east region:

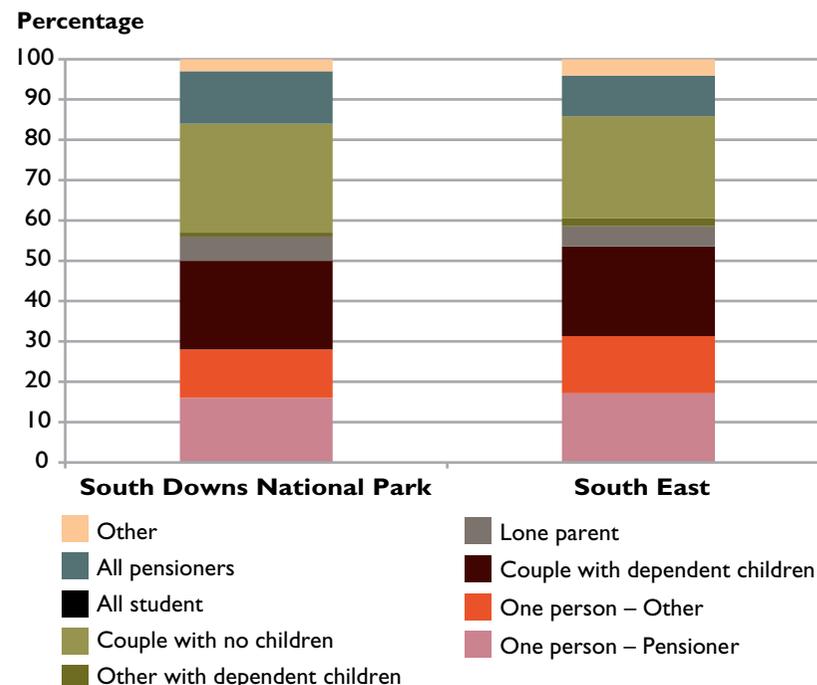
- 49 per cent of households are couple households (47 in the south east)
- 16 per cent are one person pensioner households (17 in the south east)
- 12 per cent are other single households (14 in the south east)

Public consultation has highlighted concerns that many large homes are under-occupied, with only one or two people living in homes which could accommodate a large family. The data collected on household composition does reveal that there are a high proportion of single and couple households and, given the proportion of detached and semi detached homes, it may be that under-occupation is an issue for parts of the National Park.

 We need data on under-occupation of homes.

<sup>123</sup> HCC Report (2011) *South Downs National Park Local Economy: Current Economic Indicators for the Local Economy of the South Downs National Park*

Figure 8.6 Comparison of household composition



Source: Office for National Statistics (2001) *Census 2001*, Office for National Statistics

### Housing need

Given the high proportion of larger houses and the associated high prices of housing, access to affordable housing is a key issue facing many local communities. Young people and young families, in particular, find it difficult to get low-cost housing and therefore to continue living in the area.

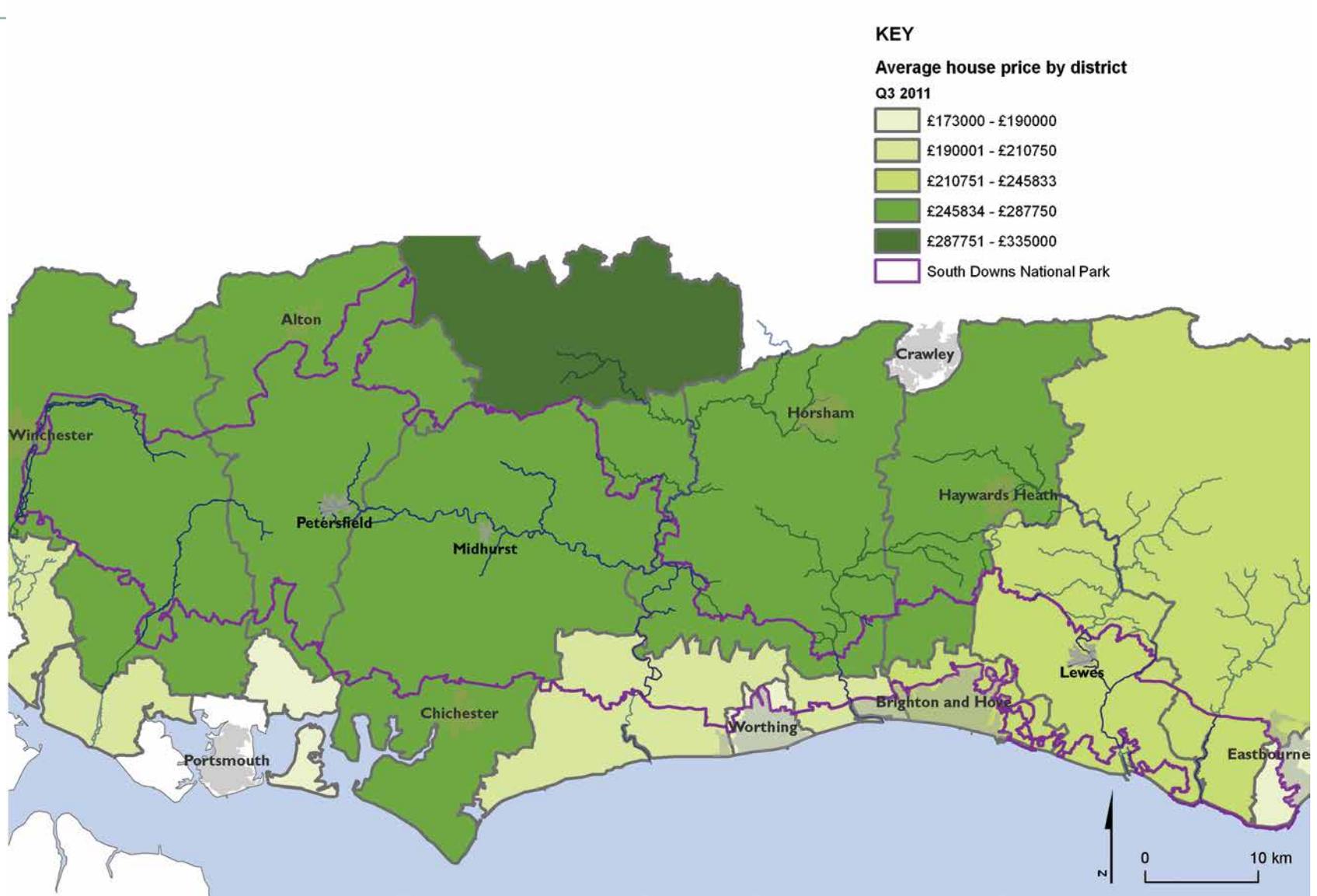
### Map 8.3

Average house price  
by district

Maps prepared by:  
GeoSpec, University of  
Brighton; February 2012.

Source: Housing  
Requirements Study,  
South Downs National  
Park Authority, 2011

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There were 3780 households on housing waiting lists in 2010 which represents 7 per cent of all households in the National Park. It is important to note that the housing needs waiting list is not always a good indication of urgent housing need. It is also important to remember that numbers on waiting lists in individual authorities can fluctuate significantly year on year if authorities undertake reviews, for example. The numbers on waiting lists in almost all of the authorities within the National Park have increased over the last three years.<sup>124</sup>

### Homelessness

There were an estimated 56 homeless households in the National Park in 2010, with the majority to be found in East Hampshire, Chichester and Lewes. Local authorities often use this data as a clear indicator of monitoring changes in housing need in a particular area.<sup>125</sup> The term homelessness is often considered only to apply to people 'sleeping rough', however most statistics on homelessness relate to statutory homeless individuals.



**For more information on homelessness.**

### Empty homes

There is currently no data available on the number of empty homes in the National Park. However, using statistics provided by the Department for Communities and Local Government Housing Strategy Statistics report an empty homes figure has been established for the South Downs buffer. In 2011, there were around 23,000 empty homes in the buffer area (approximately 2.5 per cent of the homes in Sussex and Hampshire), this is an increase of more than 2 per cent from 2008 figures.



**We need data on the number of empty homes.**

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<sup>124</sup> South Downs National Park Authority (2011) *South Downs National Park Housing Requirements Study*, SDNPA

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid*

### Holiday homes and second home ownership

Data is being collected to establish the current position regarding second home ownership in the South Downs National Park. This report will be updated when data is available.



**We need data on the number of second and holiday homes.**

### New development

An estimated 2500 new homes have been built in the National Park area since 2001, an average of approximately 250 per year. This is based on analysis of data provided by local authorities, although it has been necessary to make some assumptions about whether housing recorded as being provided in a ward or parish should be included or excluded as it may be that a development occurred in a ward or parish, but outside of the National Park boundary.<sup>126</sup>

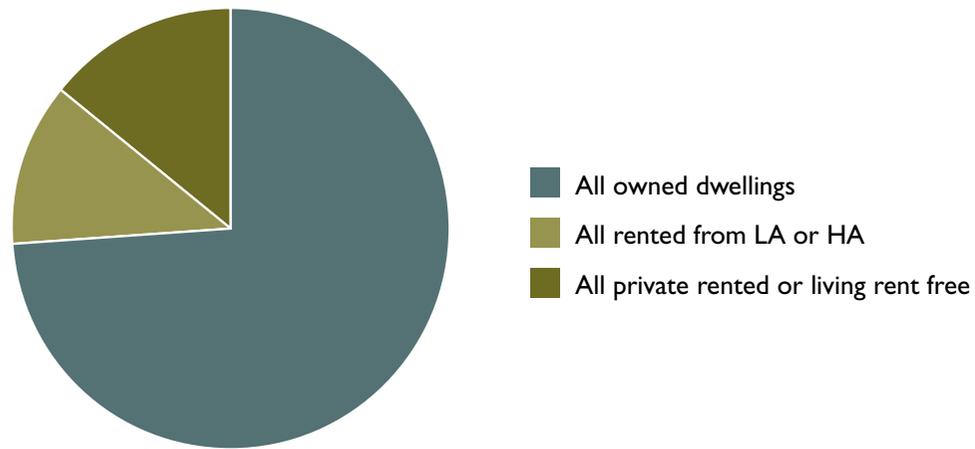
### Housing supply

In 2001, 74 per cent of homes were owner occupied, with 14 per cent being privately rented and 12 per cent socially rented (approximately 6000 homes). It is difficult to show how the proportion of socially rented accommodation has changed over time as there are currently only records from the 2001 Census. It is important to highlight here that housing need is not met wholly by the development of new housing.

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<sup>126</sup> *Ibid*

**Figure 8.7** Tenure composition in the National Park



Source: Office for National Statistics (2001) *Census 2001*, Office for National Statistics



Cowdray Estate houses in Midhurst © Rebecca Saunders/SDNPA

Although housing need appears to have outstripped housing development there are other opportunities for people who wish to move to or remain living in the National Park, such as privately rented accommodation. The provision of such accommodation through the larger estates who rent to farm workers and people living locally is particularly important in the National Park. The provision of private rented accommodation is difficult to predict or analyse given the constant change in vacancies. The average cost of renting a home across the South Downs National Park is £1130 per month. This is an average across the three counties and Brighton and Hove, and provides an average rental price across all types and size of housing.

 [For more information on rental prices.](#)

The supply of socially rented housing is managed across the National Park by a range of housing associations working in partnership with the relevant local authority. There are currently over 20 main associations working on the provision of socially rented accommodation.

 [For more details of these providers.](#)

### Provision of sheltered accommodation

Given the projections for an ageing population in the National Park, the provision of sheltered or supported accommodation will become increasingly important. Currently there are an estimated 938 individual sheltered units available in the National Park buffer area.

 [For more detail on where these sheltered units are located.](#)

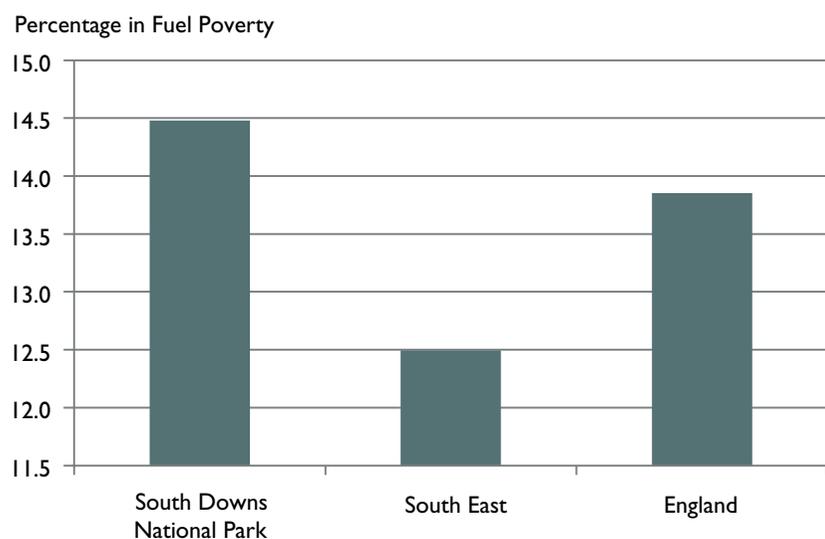
### Fuel poverty

The rural nature of the National Park means that some homes in the area are not on the mains gas network and are therefore reliant on other sources of fuel to heat their home. This impacts on the number of homes which are classified

as 'fuel poor'. A household is considered to be 'fuel poor' if it needs to spend more than 10 per cent of household income on fuel to maintain a satisfactory level of heating (21 degrees for the main living area and 18 degrees for other occupied rooms).

Figure 8.8 clearly shows that the majority of the National Park has at least some households living in fuel poverty. Map 8.4 shows that the highest instances of fuel poverty occur in the Chichester, Arun and Horsham Districts. There are smaller pockets of fuel poverty in the districts of Lewes and Wealden.

**Figure 8.8 Fuel poverty**



When compared to the south east region and England as a whole it becomes apparent that the percentage of homes in fuel poverty is higher in the South Downs National Park (14.5 per cent compared with 12.5 per cent in the south east).

## Rural crime

The community consultation exercises carried out throughout the National Park identified rural crime as a concern for sections of the community, in particular, land managers. The majority of the National Park is in the 20 per cent of the country least affected by crime, with crime being more of an issue in the surrounding urban areas. However, this may be only a reflection of the types of crime assessed by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation, and the level of reporting in rural areas.

Indices of Multiple Deprivation Scores for crime are calculated using reported violent crimes, burglary, theft and criminal damage. Indices of Multiple Deprivation Scores for crime shows that incidents are not common in the National Park but pockets of crime do exist in certain areas within and surrounding it.



**The Multiple Deprivation Scores for crime can be seen in the suite of IMD maps.**

In discussions with Hampshire and Sussex Police Constabularies, it is apparent that the key rural crimes affecting the National Park are environmental anti-social behaviour, which includes fly-tipping and littering. Other rural crimes include inappropriate use of rights of way, illegal use of private land, farm equipment theft, fuel theft, poaching and vehicle crime.

More specific analysis is needed to understand the key rural crime issues. Data is not readily available, and where it is, it is not easily comparable across the two police authorities operating in the National Park.



**We need data on incidents of rural crime.**

Work is continuing with these police authorities to create an accurate record of rural crime rates in the National Park. These will be reported when available and monitored to indicate any changes.

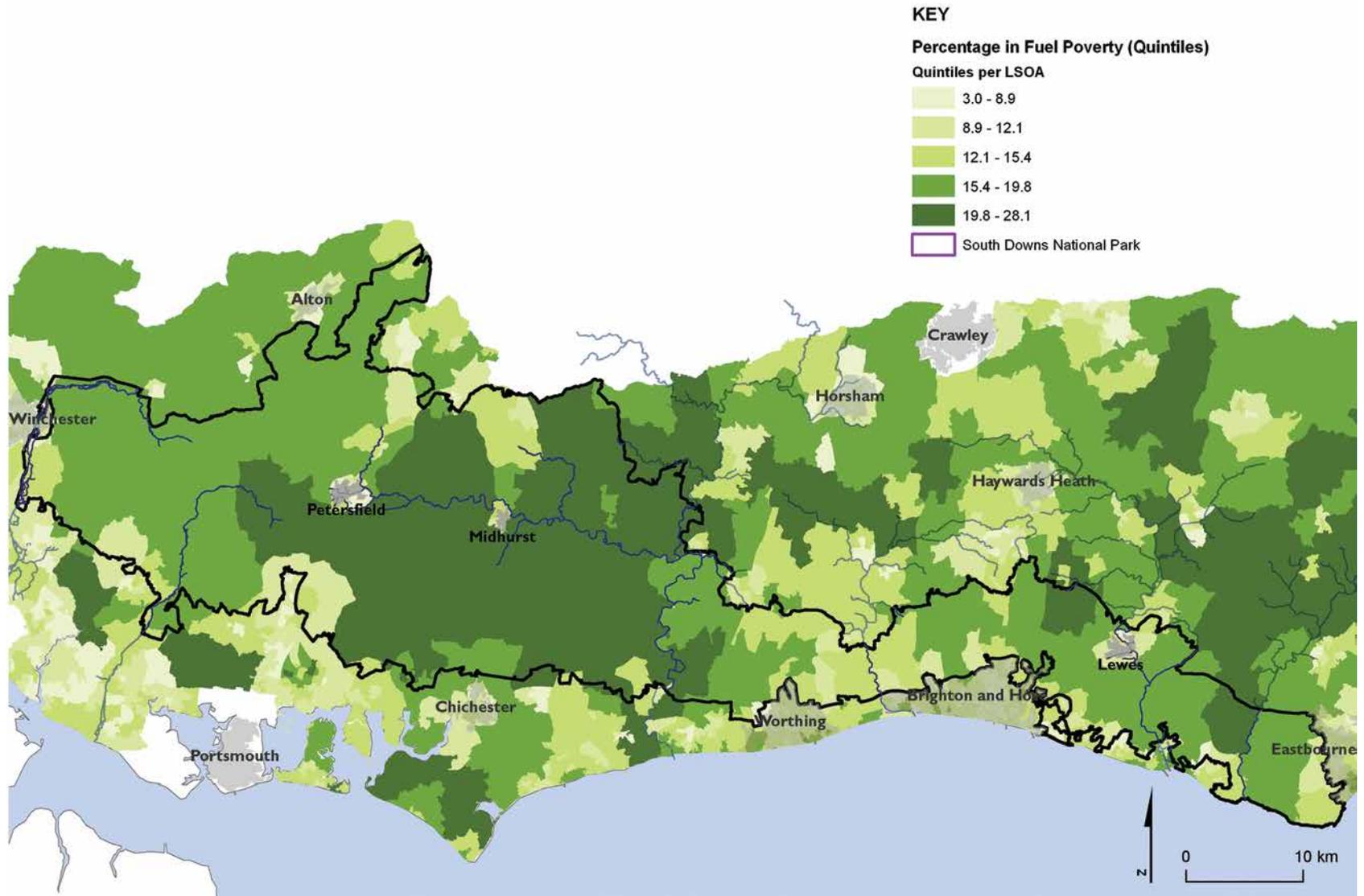
## Map 8.4

### Fuel poverty

Maps prepared by:  
GeoSpec, University of  
Brighton; February 2012.

Source: Department for  
Energy and Climate  
Change, 2009

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## Services in communities

The majority of the National Park is in the 20 per cent most deprived areas in the country for access to services and housing.

 **The Multiple Deprivation Scores for barriers to services and housing can be seen in the suite of IMD maps.**

Many of the communities in the National Park have seen a general decline in community facilities such as the post office, general store, pub or school. The availability of these services is often a good indicator of the sustainability of a community and, therefore, its viability as a place to live. Accessing essential services is very challenging for those who do not live close to a market town or major settlement. Analysis of Community Led Plans such as Parish Plans and Market Town Healthchecks clearly shows that the loss of community facilities is a key concern for local people.

It is also apparent that accessing key local services and housing is an issue that goes beyond the National Park boundary, although it seems to be less of an issue along the south coast.

Given the rural nature of the National Park, communities are turning to high speed internet connections to access services such as banking, grocery shopping and, occasionally health care. However, limited high speed internet access makes this method of accessing services challenging. More detail on the availability of high speed internet can be found in Chapter 5.

We are carrying out a Settlement Hierarchy Study to provide more specific data on community access to key services. This study will establish exactly which facilities exist in each community – such as post offices, supermarkets or general stores, pubs, primary schools and village halls. We will then compare this data to south east regional averages where data is available.

## Active communities

The communities in the National Park take real pride in their towns and villages, and many of them dedicate time and resources to enhancing community life, conserving what is important to their local area and planning for the needs of future generations.

Communities will often use community planning exercises such as Parish Plans, neighbourhood plans, village design statements and Local Landscape Character Assessments (LLCA), local biodiversity action plans, and conservation area appraisals to assess community life and develop action plans to tackle local issues.

Currently there are 97 communities who have carried out or are carrying out a community planning exercise of one type or another. This is equivalent to 54 per cent of communities in the National Park. Map 8.5 clearly shows the level of active community planning across the National Park.



*A community discussing a Community Led Plan © SDNPA*

With our partners we will monitor the number of community-led planning exercises to measure the level of local action in improving quality of life for residents and visitors. We will also monitor the use of our resources in supporting the development and delivery of community-led planning exercises. This will enable us and our partners to assess the level of support that is being committed to fostering the social and economic well-being of the communities in the National Park.

Local Landscape Character Assessments are of particular interest to us as these exercises ask local communities to assess and value the landscape in which they live. This information can be used to provide a comprehensive understanding of the value local communities place on their surroundings.

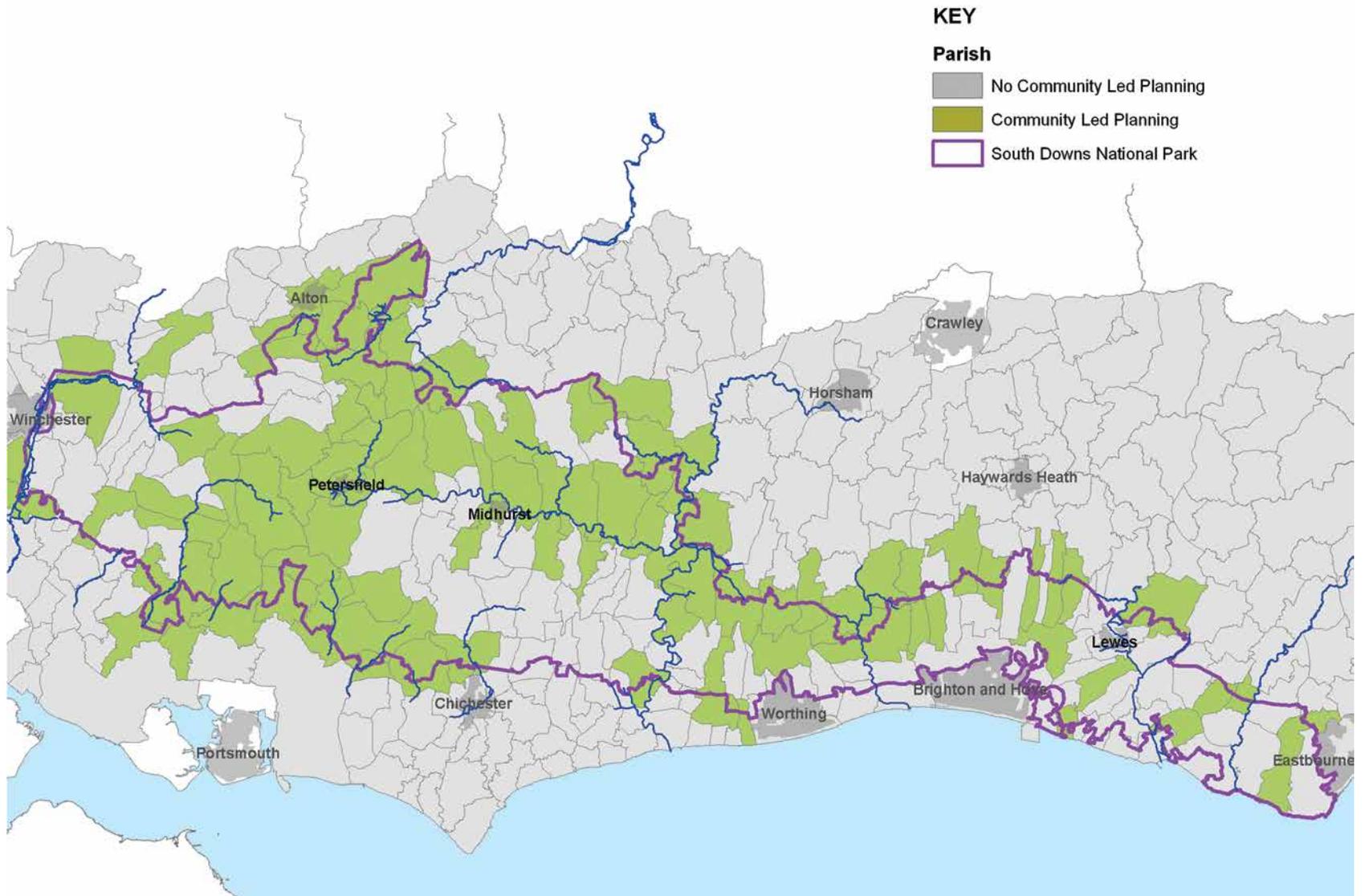
## Map 8.5

Community planning activity in the National Park

Maps prepared by:  
GeoSpec, University of  
Brighton; May 2012.

Source: South Downs  
Community Consultation  
Review, South Downs  
National Park Authority,  
2012

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## Key data: Distinctive towns and villages, and communities with real pride in their area



### Population density

The National Park Authority, with its partners, will monitor changes in the population density of the National Park:

- **Key data:** The population density of the National Park, measured in the number of people per km<sup>2</sup>.
- **Current position:** 70 people per km<sup>2</sup>.
- **Data source:** Office for National Statistics (2009) *Mid year population estimates*, Office for National Statistics
- **Responsibility for data collection:** ONS.

### Population age

The National Park Authority, with its partners, will monitor changes in the age profile of the population of the National Park:

- **Key data:** The age profile of the National Park population.
- **Current position:** 0–14 17 per cent, 15–64 61 per cent, 65+ 21 per cent.
- **Data source:** Office for National Statistics (2009) *Mid year population estimates*, Office for National Statistics
- **Responsibility for data collection:** ONS.

### Housing affordability

The National Park Authority, with its partners, will monitor changes in household affordability:

- **Key data:** The number of average annual salaries needed to purchase an average priced house.
- **Current position:** 9.5 times the average annual salary.
- **Data source:** Community and Local Government Live Table (March 2012) *Table 577- District Level*, The Department for Communities and Local Government
- **Responsibility for data collection:** DCLG.

### Services in communities

The National Park Authority, with its partners, will monitor changes in the key services available in communities across the National Park:

- **Key data:**
  - the proportion of communities with access to a post office, supermarket or general store, pub, primary school and village hall in their community; and
  - the proportion of communities with access to a post office, supermarket or general store, pub, primary school and village hall within 2km of their community.
- **Current position:** Unknown.
- **Data source:** South Downs National Park Authority, *South Downs National Park Settlement Hierarchy Study*, South Downs National Park Authority
- **Responsibility for data collection:** South Downs National Park Authority.

## Active communities

The National Park Authority, with its partners, will monitor the number of community led planning exercises being prepared or completed in the National Park. The National Park Authority will also monitor the level of NPA resources used to support the delivery of Community Led Plans:

- **Key data:**
  - the proportion of communities with a complete plan or preparing a community-led plan;
  - the proportion of Sustainable Community Fund Grants which contribute to the delivery of projects identified through community-led plan;
  - the proportion of communities with a complete or preparing a Local Landscape Character Assessment.
- **Current position:**
  - the proportion of communities with a complete or preparing a community-led plan: 54 per cent;
  - the proportion of Sustainable Community Fund Grants which contribute to the delivery of projects identified through community-led plan: unknown;
  - the proportion of communities with a complete or preparing a Local Landscape Character Assessment: 3 per cent (6 communities).
- **Data source:** South Downs National Park Authority (2012) *South Downs National Park Community Led Planning Database*, South Downs National Park Authority
- **Responsibility for data collection:** Rural Community Councils (Action in Rural Sussex or Community Action Hampshire) and South Downs National Park Authority.



## Chapter 9

# LOOKING AHEAD

This *State of the South Downs National Park 2012* provides the foundation on which the National Park Vision, Management Plan, and the Local Plan will be built.

### Measuring progress

This report provides a baseline for measuring change. Monitoring the key datasets featured throughout the chapters will provide a clear picture on the ways in which many aspects of the National Park are changing. New datasets are likely to emerge during the lifetime of this report, and, where relevant, these will be added as links to the online version.

In some places we have highlighted, using the help icon (🔍), gaps in key data which we believe need to be filled. We will work actively with other stakeholders, including the South Downs Partnership and the Learning Partnership (of colleges and universities) to fill these gaps.

### Using the Management Plan and Local Plan to identify challenges and issues

This is the first complete picture of the South Downs National Park across its whole area and covering all of its special qualities. In developing the National Park Management Plan and Local Plan, the current state of the National Park will be considered alongside external factors, challenges and likely future trends, and the issues which will arise from these trends. These two plans will:

- analyse these factors, challenges and trends;
- identify and prioritise the most important issues; and
- set out programmes and policies which will mitigate negative trends and allow positive opportunities to be grasped.

This report is not the place to pre-empt the issues which will feature in the Management Plan and Local Plan. There are, however, a number of broad

challenges beginning to emerge which will need to be much more fully explored in these plans. A few examples help to illustrate how this will evolve:

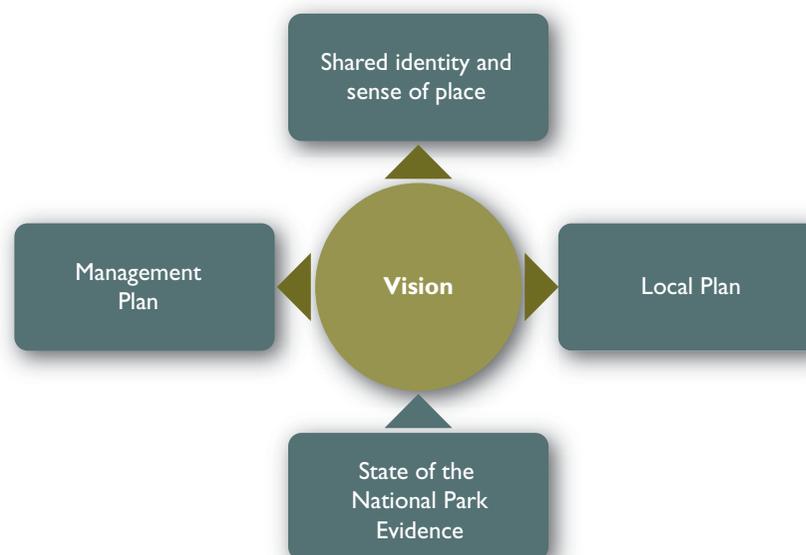
- Climate change impacts are already being felt in terms of growing seasons and weather patterns, leading to changes in the distribution and abundance of species, the quality of habitats, the availability of water, and the viability of different types of cropping and land use.
- Improving the economic viability of the landscape – whether directly by producing food and timber, or indirectly by providing essential, natural services such as clean water – is the only genuine way of ensuring its long-term conservation and enhancement.
- As part of the above, finding and promoting the most sustainable models for the future of farming, forestry and tourism will be extremely important.
- The ecosystem services the National Park provides need to be better understood, quantified and valued: for example, in this heavily populated and dry part of Britain, better stewardship of water resources is likely to be a priority.
- The population dynamics and trends in the National Park are complex and are likely to impact on its economy and communities in a very profound way in the future.
- In their scale, character and dynamics, Petersfield and Lewes are significantly different to their surrounding rural areas. A distinct approach will be needed for each which identifies opportunities to link these towns more robustly with their hinterlands to achieve mutual benefit.

This list is merely indicative, there are many other issues which will need to be considered. The resolution of competing pressures and demands on each part of the National Park will be critical to it remaining an exceptional national asset. Given all of the above, the role of the Local Plan – its policies and, where appropriate, its spatial detail – will be crucial in ensuring that National Park purposes and duty can be secured together, rather than at the expense of each other.

## The framework for creating an outward facing National Park

In an area with such a wealth of talent, resources and assets it is not appropriate for the National Park Authority to attempt to try and do everything itself – our role should be more that of an architect and catalyst than of a builder. The Management Plan provides a mechanism for many different partners and organisations to come together to deliver things by sharing ideas, knowledge and resources. Figure 9.1 sets out the relationship between this report, the Vision, Management Plan, Local Plan and work on an overarching brand and identity for the National Park.

Figure 9.1 A strategic framework for the National Park



**The Vision** sets out, succinctly, how the many stakeholders in the future of the National Park would like it to look and feel in 2050. With the Vision will come a basket of high level measures of the sorts of impacts on the ground these stakeholders would like to be able to measure: the Vision is where we want to be, these measures will tell us whether we are getting there.

## The South Downs National Park Vision

By 2050 in the South Downs National Park:

- the iconic English lowland landscapes and heritage will have been conserved and greatly enhanced. These inspirational and distinctive places, where people live, work, farm and relax, are adapting well to the impacts of climate change and other pressures;
- people will understand, value, and look after the vital natural services that the National Park provides. Large areas of high-quality and well-managed habitat will form a network supporting wildlife throughout the landscape;
- opportunities will exist for everyone to discover, enjoy, understand and value the National Park and its special qualities. The relationship between people and landscape will enhance their lives and inspire them to become actively involved in caring for it and using its resources more responsibly;
- its special qualities will underpin the economic and social well-being of the communities in and around it, which will be more self-sustaining and empowered to shape their own future. Its villages and market towns will be thriving centres for residents, visitors and businesses and supporting the wider rural community;
- successful farming, forestry, tourism and other business activities within the National Park will actively contribute to, and derive economic benefit from, its unique identity and special qualities.

**The Management Plan** will take the Vision and this *State of the South Downs National Park 2012* as its starting point. It will set out in detail the challenges and identify the key issues they raise. Its focus will be firmly on the practical steps that can be taken towards achieving the Vision over the next five years, by setting out a number of overall priorities for joint action – each with a clear outcome which is supported by a delivery partnership of stakeholders who have committed resources to its achievement. Work is well underway to identify these priorities and partners.

**The Local Plan** will give a spatial and planning policy dimension to the Vision. It will set out overall planning policies which will apply across the National Park, and, where appropriate, include more detailed and localised spatial allocations for key uses such as housing, employment and leisure, together with other statutory elements such as the provision of gypsy and traveller sites. It will be complemented by a set of minerals and waste strategies developed in conjunction with the three County Councils and Brighton and Hove City Council, supported by neighbourhood plans developed by parishes and communities.

Finally, the work on **shared identity and sense of place** will use the Vision as the basis to work with many others to create a common look and feel for the National Park and a 'sense of place' toolkit which can be used by local communities and businesses, attractions, landowners, non-governmental organisations and utility companies.

The South Downs National Park is not a remote island of natural beauty, but a working landscape the future of which remains inextricably interdependent with the areas that adjoin it. The National Park is seen as a special place by its over 110,000 residents and also by citizens of surrounding cities and towns like Alton, Winchester, Eastbourne, Brighton and Hove, Portsmouth, Horsham and Crawley. These cities and towns make an enormous contribution to the National Park's economy, providing visitors and commuters inwards to work, as well as purchasers of goods and services. Both its landscape and the interests of its people will therefore be best served by close working partnerships across its borders: the people, communities and businesses of the National Park and the areas around it are a great asset in achieving its purposes. However, their sheer numbers and pressure on resources also pose a great threat to its special qualities. The challenge, therefore, is to capitalise on the former and minimise the risk of the latter.

A key challenge for both the Management Plan and Local Plan is therefore to bring together the interests of those inside and outside the National Park in a common endeavour. Taken as a whole, this suite of documents will provide a framework, rallying point and catalyst for the many organisations, communities and individuals who derive their livelihoods and their inspiration, from Britain's newest and most populated National Park.



SDNPA Chair Margaret Parn, launches the National Park in Petersfield © Glen Harris

# Appendix I

## PARK PROFILE

Dimensions:	Area	Data source
Total National Park Area	1,653km <sup>2</sup>	SDNPA GIS Data Catalogue
Hampshire County Council	559km <sup>2</sup>	
West Sussex County Council	812km <sup>2</sup>	
East Sussex County Council	243km <sup>2</sup>	
Brighton and Hove Unitary Authority	3.75km <sup>2</sup>	
National Park length	113.7km	
National Park maximum width	49.4km	
Highest point – Blackdown	280mAOD	Source: National Parks website: Accessed: 25/3/2012 <a href="http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk/press/factsandfigures.htm">www.nationalparks.gov.uk/press/factsandfigures.htm</a>
Coastline	14km	Source: National Parks website: Accessed: 25/3/2012 <a href="http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk/press/factsandfigures.htm">www.nationalparks.gov.uk/press/factsandfigures.htm</a>

Dimensions:	Area	Data source
<i>Area comparison with other National Parks</i>		
Brecon Beacons	1,344km <sup>2</sup>	Source: National Parks website: Accessed: 25/3/2012 <a href="http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk/press/factsandfigures.htm">www.nationalparks.gov.uk/press/factsandfigures.htm</a>
Broads	305km <sup>2</sup>	
Cairngorms	4,528km <sup>2</sup>	
Dartmoor	953km <sup>2</sup>	
Exmoor	694km <sup>2</sup>	
Lake District	2,292km <sup>2</sup>	
Loch Lomond and the Trossachs	1,865km <sup>2</sup>	
New Forest	570km <sup>2</sup>	
Northumberland	1,048km <sup>2</sup>	
North York Moors	1,434km <sup>2</sup>	
Peak District	1,437km <sup>2</sup>	
Pembrokeshire Coast	621km <sup>2</sup>	
Snowdonia	2,176km <sup>2</sup>	
Yorkshire Dales	1,769km <sup>2</sup>	

<b>Population:</b>	<b>Thousand</b>	<b>Data source</b>
Resident population	110,400	South Downs National Park Local Economy Report, Hampshire County Council, 2011

#### **Comparison with other National Parks**

Brecon Beacons	32,000	Source: National Parks website: Accessed: 25/3/2012  <a href="http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk/press/factsandfigures.htm">www.nationalparks.gov.uk/press/factsandfigures.htm</a> .
Broads	5,721	
Cairngorms	17,000	Population figures taken from 2011 Census
Dartmoor	34,000	
Exmoor	10,600	
Lake District	42,200	
Loch Lomond and the Trossachs	15,600	
New Forest	34,400	
Northumberland	2,200	
North York Moors	25,000	
Peak District	38,000	
Pembrokeshire Coast	22,800	
Snowdonia	25,482	
Yorkshire Dales	19,654	

<b>Population Density Rank:</b>	<b>Population km<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Data source</b>
South Downs	67	Source: National Parks website: Accessed: 25/3/2012  <a href="http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk/press/factsandfigures.htm">www.nationalparks.gov.uk/press/factsandfigures.htm</a> .
New Forest	60	Population figures taken from 2001 Census
Pembrokeshire Coast	37	
Dartmoor	36	
Peak District	26	
Brecon Beacons	24	
Broads	19	
Lake District	18	
North York Moors	17	
Exmoor	15	
Snowdonia	12	
Yorkshire Dales	11	
Loch Lomond and the Trossachs	8	
Cairngorms	4	
Northumberland	2	

Visitors:	Million	Data source
Visitor days a year	39 (including 34.72 non-resident visitor days a year)	Source: National Parks website: Accessed: 25/3/2012 <a href="http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk/press/factsandfigures.htm">www.nationalparks.gov.uk/press/factsandfigures.htm</a>

#### Comparison with other National Parks

Brecon Beacons	5	Visitor numbers have been taken from National Parks STEAM reports, mostly from 2009.
Broads	11.3	
Cairngorms	3.1	
Dartmoor	3.1	
Exmoor	2	
Lake District	23.1	
Loch Lomond and the Trossachs	7	
New Forest	13.5	
Northumberland	1.7	
North York Moors	10.7	
Peak District	10.4	
Pembrokeshire Coast	13	
Snowdonia	10.4	
Yorkshire Dales	12.6	

Visitor spend per annum:	Million	Data source
Visitor spend per annum	£177.7	Source: National Parks website: Accessed: 25/3/2012 <a href="http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk/press/factsandfigures.htm">www.nationalparks.gov.uk/press/factsandfigures.htm</a>

#### Comparison with other National Parks

Brecon Beacons	£197	Source: National Parks website: Accessed: 25/3/2012 <a href="http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk/press/factsandfigures.htm">www.nationalparks.gov.uk/press/factsandfigures.htm</a>
Broads	£419	
Cairngorms	£185	
Dartmoor	£111	
Exmoor	£85	
Lake District	£952	
Loch Lomond and the Trossachs	£190	
New Forest	£123	
Northumberland	£190	
North York Moors	£411	
Peak District	£356	
Pembrokeshire Coast	£498	
Snowdonia	£396	
Yorkshire Dales	£400	

Environmental Stewardship: Hectares	Data source
Total area under ES schemes	80,852
	Natural England, Protected Landscapes Pilot Project 17 November, 2011

**Comparison with other English National Parks**

Broads	7,998	Natural England, Protected Landscapes Pilot Project 17 November, 2011
Dartmoor	41,189	
Exmoor	30,296	
Lake District	73,080	
New Forest	29,661	
Northumberland	66,837	
North York Moors	78,244	
Peak District	46,621	
Yorkshire Dales	126,484	

Conservation Areas: Number	Data source
Number of Conservation Areas	165
	Source: National Parks website: Accessed: 25/3/2012
	 <a href="http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk/press/factsandfigures.htm">www.nationalparks.gov.uk/press/factsandfigures.htm</a> .

**Comparison with other National Parks**

Brecon Beacons	0	Source: National Parks website: Accessed: 25/3/2012
Broads	18	 <a href="http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk/press/factsandfigures.htm">www.nationalparks.gov.uk/press/factsandfigures.htm</a> .
Cairngorms	4	
Dartmoor	23	
Exmoor	16	
Lake District	21	
Loch Lomond and the Trossachs	7	
New Forest	18	
Northumberland	3	
North York Moors	42	
Peak District	109	
Pembrokeshire Coast	13	
Snowdonia	14	
Yorkshire Dales	37	

<b>Public Rights of Way:</b>	<b>Kilometres</b>	<b>Data source</b>
Total length of PRW	3,332	SDNPA
<b>Comparison with other English National Parks</b>		
Dartmoor	724	Source: Dartmoor National Park website: Accessed: 25/3/2012: <a href="http://www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk/lookingafter/au-rangerservice">www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk/lookingafter/au-rangerservice</a> .
Exmoor	1,000	Source: Exmoor National Park Management Plan, 2007-2012 <a href="http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/about-us/authority/exmoor-national-park-management-plan">www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/about-us/authority/exmoor-national-park-management-plan</a>
Lake District	3,010	Source: Lake District National Park website: Accessed: 25/3/2012: <a href="http://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/caringfor/state_of_the_park">www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/caringfor/state_of_the_park</a> .
New Forest	310	Source: New Forest National Park website: Accessed: 25/3/2012: <a href="http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/26633/tourism5-access.pdf">www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/26633/tourism5-access.pdf</a> .
Northumberland	1,100	Source: Natural England website: Accessed: 25/3/2012: <a href="http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/designatedareas/nationalparks/northumberland/default.aspx">www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/designatedareas/nationalparks/northumberland/default.aspx</a> .
North York Moors	2,200	Source: North York Moors National Park website: Accessed: 25/3/2012: <a href="http://www.northyorkmoors.org.uk/rights-of-way-and-access/">www.northyorkmoors.org.uk/rights-of-way-and-access/</a> .

Peak District	3,005	Source: Peak District National Park website: Accessed: 25/3/2012: <a href="http://resources.peakdistrict.gov.uk/pubs/sopr/sop60-61.pdf">http://resources.peakdistrict.gov.uk/pubs/sopr/sop60-61.pdf</a> .
Yorkshire Dales	2,120	Source: Yorkshire Dales National Park website: Accessed: 25/3/2012: <a href="http://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/outandabout/rightsofwayandopenaccess/pathsandtrailsnetwork">www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/outandabout/rightsofwayandopenaccess/pathsandtrailsnetwork</a> .
<b>Open Access Land:</b>	<b>Hectares</b>	<b>Data source</b>
Total area of open access land	8,500	Source: SDNPA
<b>Comparison with other English National Parks</b>		
Broads	148	Source: Natural England, 2012
Dartmoor	46,671	
Exmoor	17,607	
Lake District	114,547	
New Forest	17,236	
North York Moors	47,976	
Northumberland	60,314	
Peak District	53,930	
Yorkshire Dales	109,977	

Scheduled Monuments:	Number	Data source
Total number of Scheduled Monuments	616	SDNPA GIS Data Catalogue
<b>Comparison with other National Parks</b>		
Broads	13	Source: National Parks website: Accessed: 25/3/2012  <a href="http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk/press/factsandfigures.htm">www.nationalparks.gov.uk/press/factsandfigures.htm</a> .
Cairngorms	60	
Dartmoor	1,208	
Exmoor	208	
Lake District	> 200	
Loch Lomond and the Trossachs	60	
New Forest	61	
Northumberland	196	
North York Moors	846	
Peak District	457	
Snowdonia	359	
Yorkshire Dales	203	

## Appendix 2

### CONSULTEES

We are grateful to the very wide range of people and organisations who have contributed time, experience and material to this report. In particular we would like to acknowledge the following:

#### Members of the South Downs Partnership

The South Downs Partnership was established by the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) as part of its ongoing commitment to strong, two-way engagement. This high-level group includes individuals from a range of backgrounds, reflecting the many different organisations with an interest in the future of the National Park, as well as Members of the SDNPA. The Partnership provided an important strategic overview throughout the development of this report.

Name	Expertise
Jane Cecil	Environment
James Seymour	Environment
Tony Whitbread	Environment
Andrew Brown	Heritage
Robert Cheesman	Heritage
John Godfrey	Heritage
Rosemary Irwin	Heritage
Chris Passmore	Land management
David Taylor	Land management
Mike Tristram	Land management
Nick Tucker	Forestry
Dave Brookshaw	Access

Name	Expertise
Glynn Jones	Access
David Stokes	Education
Sue Halstead	Community
Alison Matthews	Community
Ken Moon	Economy
Roger Paterson	Economy
Margaret Paren, SDNPA	SDNPA Chair and National Appointment
Charles Peck, SDNPA	SDNPA Deputy Chair, appointed by Wealden District Council
Nick Bennett, SDNPA	SDNPA Member, appointed by East Sussex County Council
Barbara Holyome, SDNPA	SDNPA Member, elected by the Parishes of Winchester City Council

Since this partnership was involved with this report new members have joined.

#### Members of the South Downs Learning Partnership Steering Group

The Learning Partnership Steering Group sets the strategic direction for joint working between the SDNPA and universities and colleges on behalf of the wider South Downs Learning Partnership. The Partnership's principal aim is to provide opportunities for staff and students to contribute to the Management Plan, the Local Plan and this report, and more generally to the National Park's Purposes and Duty.

## **Members of Associations of Local Councils**

Sussex Association of Local Councils and Hampshire Association of Local Councils represent the interests of, and provide support to, their member town and parish councils.

## **Members of the Technical Working Groups**

The SDNPA has set up eight technical working groups involving over 400 experts to support the development of the National Park Authority's key strategic documents. Each group acts as a critical friend, providing comment and professional guidance in the development of these documents. The groups draw their membership from a wide variety of organisations and individuals, all with relevant expertise in their field.

The groups are:

- Landscape
- Biodiversity
- Historic Environment
- Museums, Heritage and Archives
- Access and Recreation
- Learning and Outreach
- Rural Economy
- Communities





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