



Annual Report

2021-22

Foreword

As we all worked through another challenging year of Covid and lockdowns, the level of activity across the Nature Partnership continued apace. The Environment Act passed into law in November and much of our work this year focused on increasing 'readiness' across our partners for what this will bring. We established a Local Authority Network in July to provide a formal channel through which to work with and support the 11 district and borough councils across Sussex as they too grapple with new responsibilities within the Act. Meeting monthly, this network has been invaluable as we co-developed responses to Defra consultations and shared knowledge on complex and emerging topics such as Biodiversity Net Gain.

We also continued to expand our network of members and encouraged all to focus on the opportunity that Local Nature Recovery Strategies will provide to co-develop a vision and set of priorities for nature's recovery in the years ahead. Work has been done to expand our reach to those stakeholders in the marine and health/wellbeing sectors and we continue to work collectively at a regional scale through the South East Nature Partnership. Our project work, across our main themes, is developing useful tools and methodologies that will underpin progress in delivering natural capital benefits for Sussex and beyond.

As always, we couldn't do any of this work without the generous input of time and funds from our partners and thanks must go to all who have supported the work of the Partnership through this busy year. We look forward to continued progress next year, which will see the start of processes to create Local Nature Recovery Strategies – but will also mark the 10th anniversary of Sussex Nature Partnership. This milestone will no doubt provide opportunities for reflection on progress achieved in a decade but also for renewing commitment to the challenges ahead.

Kate Rice
Chair Sussex Nature Partnership:
Natural Capital Strategy Manager, Southern Water



© Kate Rice



About Sussex Nature Partnership

Sussex Nature Partnership (SxNP) was formally established in 2014 and brings together more than 25 organisations in Sussex, across seven different sectors. Its purpose is to “work across sectors and organisations to secure the healthiest ecological system possible thereby protecting and enhancing the natural environment and all that it gives us”.

To enact this vision, the work of the Nature Partnership is guided by two high-level objectives:

- 1 Conserve, enhance and expand Sussex's natural capital**
Growth in natural capital is the fundamental pre-requisite for enhancing the services provided by ecosystems and so underpins the economic and social well-being of Sussex. SxNP will promote the greening of the economy including the need to invest in nature because of the many benefits and essential services it provides.
- 2 Ensure that Sussex residents share in the benefits provided by healthy, well-functioning ecosystems**
The Nature Partnership will aim to improve the connection between people, their environment and the benefits they get from the environment. This will cover a broad spectrum of activities including health, well-being, social and economic areas. In order to deliver growth in natural capital and share in the benefits of healthy ecosystems, the Nature Partnership will ensure that the evidence is collated to promote concepts, projects and initiatives that support the positive development of ecosystem services in Sussex. This will be shared across all sectors and audiences.

Front Cover Photos:
Brighton © Marc Abraham/Sussex Wildlife Trust
Rye Harbour © Kt Bruce/Sussex Wildlife Trust
Water vole © Jo Nicholl/Sussex Wildlife Trust
Bluebellies © Dennis Hunt/Sussex Wildlife Trust

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Meetings, Resources and Communications

SxNP Board Meetings

Sussex Nature Partnership Board met four times during 2021-22:

- › 15 March 2022
- › 14 December 2021
- › 14 September 2021
- › 8 June 2021

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, all meetings were held virtually.

Funding

During 2021-22 SxNP was supported financially by:

- › East Sussex County Council
- › West Sussex County Council
- › South Downs National Park Authority
- › Sussex Wildlife Trust
- › Southern Water

Other vital support was provided through in-kind contributions of time by these and other partners.

Resources

East Sussex County Council continued to provide both secretariat

and administrative support for the Nature Partnership. Sussex Wildlife Trust also continued to hold the funds for the Partnership and provided contractual and financial administration for its projects. Julie Middleton continued to work as Policy Lead for the Nature Partnership on a part-time consultancy basis.

Communication

Sussex Nature Partnership agreed a new logo and branding this year. This was followed by the launch of a new website in order to provide greater profile for the Partnership and to disseminate information about its work. The website holds key documents published by the Partnership and information on key projects and initiatives.

🐦 sussex_lnp
📷 sussex_lnp
🌐 sussexlnp.org.uk



NATURAL ASSETS

Protecting and improving the natural environment

Throughout the year, SxNP remained committed to supporting its partners and local authorities in their 'readiness' for the new responsibilities being introduced by the Environment Act, which passed into law in November 2021. Activity focused specifically on readiness for Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS¹) and the implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

Local Nature Recovery Strategies

The **Nature Recovery Network Working Group** continued to meet and provide guidance for SxNP work on LNRS readiness. This was chaired by Claire Kerr (South Downs National Park Authority), with SDNPA colleagues providing administrative support. The group focused on sharing best practice from other local and national nature recovery network projects and on developing the response to the Defra Consultation on Local Nature Recovery Strategies (see below). This group also fed into wider work on regional nature recovery network mapping within the South East Nature Partnership.

Other work on LNRS readiness this year focused on four main areas:

1 LNRS governance across Sussex

In mid 2022, the 'Responsible Authorities' for preparing these strategies will be announced. As per the Environment Act, these authorities will be appointed by the Secretary of State and are likely to be the larger Tier 1 Local Authorities. Throughout 2021-22 SxNP, has been working with all three Tier 1 authorities in Sussex to disseminate information, engage with Natural England and Defra and ensure that wherever the responsibilities for LNRS preparation will finally lie, there will be a joined-up approach across the wider Sussex geography. SxNP is positioning itself to work in partnership across Sussex with the Responsible Authorities once the process of LNRS preparation starts.

2 Defra consultation on Local Nature Recovery Strategies

SxNP worked across its partners and all local authorities in Sussex to develop a response to the Defra consultation on "Local Nature Recovery Strategies: how to prepare and what to include". Through a series of participative sessions, a comprehensive response to the consultation questionnaire and an accompanying letter to Defra were prepared. These were submitted in

¹ Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are intended to be new spatial strategies, focused at the county scale, which set out priorities and map proposals for actions that will drive nature's recovery and provide wider benefits for people and the environment <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/land-use/local-nature-recovery-strategies/>



Corporate Volunteering © Kevin Lerwill/Sussex Wildlife Trust

November 2021 on behalf of SxNP and signatory local authorities.

SxNP also attended and contributed to a Defra webinar for Local Nature Partnerships on the topic.

In January, SxNP Chair (Kate Rice) joined other Local Nature Partnership Chairs from across the county in a roundtable discussion with Defra Minister Rebecca Pow on the future role of LNPs in preparing LNRSs.

3 Mapping and data for LNRS preparation

A project was completed this year to identify a framework for mapping the key components of a nature recovery network at the district scale in Sussex. The project also worked with local planning authorities to start to identify how this information could be used in local planning processes. Commissioned by Natural England, it involved three local authorities: Wealden DC, Rother DC and Eastbourne BC. The

mapping work was later expanded to cover the whole of Sussex with all local authorities receiving a package of mapped information as a result.

Project completed April 2021. Maps disseminated to local authorities: September 2021 http://sussexlnp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/7.-NRN-Mapping-Project_Main-Report_220421.pdf

4 Mapping delivery partnerships across Sussex

This project commenced in 2021 and continues into 2022. Its intention is to map all partnerships working across Sussex to deliver habitat creation and improvement. This will illustrate the extent and location of existing collaborative work and identify opportunities for future partnership working as a foundation for delivering LNRSs across Sussex.

*Project completion: May 2022
Project Funding: Natural England*

NATURAL ASSETS

Protecting and improving the natural environment

Biodiversity Net Gain

This work strand also flows from the Environment Act and builds on 'readiness' work started last year. The Environment Act will require Local Planning Authorities to deliver a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) through the majority of planning applications by November 2023 (within two years of enactment of the Environment Act).

This year, SxNP has focused on working with partners and local authorities to understand how the net gain approach might be implemented in practice and to provide training and knowledge sharing on the topic for local authorities. The emphasis has been on understanding how to deliver BNG so that it is ecologically 'meaningful' and will provide strategic benefit for nature in Sussex.

A **BNG Working Group** was convened in January 2022. This group will be chaired by Bridget Fox (Woodland Trust) and has adopted a Terms of Reference and Statement of Purpose. Its initial priority is to work with the SxNP Local Authority Network to develop a response to the Defra consultation on biodiversity net gain which closes in April 2022.

Other work in this area this year included:

1 Partnership with Environment Agency

On behalf of SxNP, ESCC has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the

Environment Agency (Flood and Coastal Risk, Sussex) to develop a methodology for identifying strategic sites for offsite biodiversity net gain from major flood defence projects, for which it has committed to deliver 20% BNG. This project will help to inform wider understanding of the implementation of BNG in practice.

Project timeframe: This work started in early 2022 and will continue throughout the first half of the year.

2 District-level site registers for natural capital projects (and BNG)

Funding was secured at the end of March from Coast 2 Capital Local Enterprise Partnership to work alongside Surrey Wildlife Trust to develop a methodology for preparing 'site registers for BNG and nature based solutions'. This will work at the district level and prepare pilot site registers for two district councils in West Sussex and two in Surrey. The learning and pilot case studies will then be shared with other local authorities across the two counties. The project work will start formally in April 2022. See more information under theme 2 below.

Sussex Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) Initiative

This initiative sits within the umbrella of SxNP but is administered by Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre. This year, work has included field surveys of 31 Local

"The SxLNP LAN has been invaluable. Without it, our local authority's understanding of the Environment Act and emerging BNG and associated legislation would be far poorer and we would be even less prepared. If only we had a pan-Sussex advisory group and support network as good as this for all planning-related topics."

Rother District Council

Wildlife Sites (LWSs) and creation of a list of sites to be surveyed in 2022. Survey reports and recommendations were reviewed by the LWS Technical Panel in autumn/winter 2021.

See <https://lws-sussex.org.uk>

The coastal and marine environment

In early 2022, SxNP supported Sussex Wildlife Trust (SWT) in a bid for funding from the Environment Agency's "Championing Coastal Collaboration" initiative. This was successful and throughout March the appointed consultants have been carrying out stakeholder engagement across



Redshank © Barry Yates/Sussex Wildlife Trust

organisations in Sussex working on habitat creation and restoration in the marine and coastal environments. The aim has been to collate thoughts from all stakeholders on a vision and priorities for habitat creation and restoration in these environments and to identify how best to support future collaborative working in the maritime zone.

Sussex Wildlife Trust will report on project findings in April/May 2022.

Natural Capital Investment Strategy – Progress

See the appendix for a brief progress report on elements of the Natural Capital Investment Strategy (SxLNP 2019) implemented this year.

Business case for district level site registers for natural capital projects

In early 2022, SxNP worked with Surrey Wildlife Trust (consultancy) on a joint bid to Coast 2 Capital's business case development fund. This project will support the creation of 'site registers for natural capital investment' in two districts in West Sussex (and two in Surrey). These registers will identify target areas where natural capital investment could deliver multiple benefits for nature and people and will assist local authorities in selecting suitable places for offsite net gain, nature-based solutions for flood risk reduction, carbon sequestration and so on. The methodology will be disseminated to other local authorities across Sussex. Funding was awarded in March 2022 and work will formally start in April 2022.

Project duration: April 2022 – March 2023

"The Sussex Nature Partnership Local Authority Network has offered support, shared advice and professional expertise on a number of key matters in a currently changing context, in an area where the council doesn't have its own in-house expert. Through regular meetings on a variety of relevant topics, correspondence and circulating information, preparing joint responses to national consultations and creating networking links and contacts, the LA Network has been an invaluable resource."

Crawley Borough Council



Health and Wellbeing Working Group

SxNP Health and Wellbeing Group developed its action plan this year and has focused specifically on building relationships across sectors and ensuring that the role of nature in delivering benefits for health and wellbeing can be reflected strongly in Local Nature Recovery Strategy processes as they start later in 2022.

A priority for the group has been to bring key stakeholders together across the eNGO, local government, NHS and community sectors to discuss 'nature and health' and to identify common priorities for action that can be brought forward as part of LNRS processes. A workshop with leaders of these sectors planned for March was unfortunately postponed due to re-organisation taking place within the health sector. But the ambition remains to hold this event later in the year as a vital part of LNRS readiness.

Penny Shimmin (Sussex Community Development Association) continues to chair this working group.

Publicly owned greenspaces

Working across seven case study parks in Adur/Worthing and Wealden Districts, this project draws to a close in April 2022. Its purpose was to develop a methodology for park managers to use when assessing the wide range of natural capital benefits delivered by parks and greenspaces. It has included 'health audits' for parks in Crowborough, Uckfield and Hailsham. Outputs from the project will be disseminated across local authorities in Sussex throughout 2022.

Project timeframe: ends April 2022
Funding: South Downs National Park Authority and East Sussex County Council (Public Health)

"The Local Authority Network provides a really helpful discussion forum alongside helpful and interesting presentations on current topics relating to nature conservation. The secretariat are committed to sharing knowledge and assisting those in the network which is greatly appreciated"

Horsham District Council



Nature Tots © Kt Bruce/Sussex Wildlife Trust

This work stream continued to grow throughout 2021-22 as interest in the potential for habitats to store and sequester carbon increased in response to climate emergency planning across sectors.

Accelerating nature-based solutions for carbon

In April 2021, SxNP was part of a successful funding bid to South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) for a project entitled 'Accelerating nature-based solutions for carbon'. Working across the SELEP area of East Sussex, Kent and Essex, this project is investigating demand for local nature-based carbon offsetting opportunities and factors influencing the development or 'supply' of these sorts of projects. It involves case studies with four local authorities in the SELEP area,

local businesses and landowners. Its final outputs will include resources to support the 'supply' side' in bringing forward projects and a review of the merits of a brokerage hub' to bring together the demand and supply sides.

Project duration: completes in May 2022
Project Funding: South East Local Enterprise Partnership
Project hosted and managed by East Sussex County Council.

Woodland Opportunity Mapping

› Lewes Pilot Project

A pilot project with Lewes District to create a GIS 'woodland opportunity map' for the district was completed in mid 2021. Carried out by a Masters

Student placement from University of Brighton, this project customised a methodology developed by Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty for application in the Sussex context. Its aim was to agree and then map the various factors that indicate a constraint to woodland creation (due to a range of environmental factors) and those which indicate where woodland creation is appropriate and would deliver benefits. The project involved significant engagement with the local authority and experts from across woodland and nature-based organisations in Sussex.

Project duration: March 2021-June 2021.
Project Funding: no direct funding; time provided by University of Brighton (Student placement), Lewes District Council and SxNP Policy Lead

› Woodland Opportunity Mapping for Sussex and South Downs National Park

In late 2021, funding was secured to expand the pilot project across Sussex and the remainder of the South Downs National Park in Hampshire. This included refining the methodology used for the pilot project and engaging more widely with relevant experts. A technical report and user guide is being produced and will be available on the SxNP website when published. This will accompany the final GIS output which will be hosted and maintained by the South Downs National Park Authority.

"The LA network has been invaluable in quickly gaining an understanding of new and complex issues like Local Nature Recovery Strategies and Biodiversity Net Gain, and for being able to discuss shared issues with colleagues across the counties."

Chichester District Council

Wider dissemination of the outputs will be carried out by SxNP across its members and local authorities in the first quarter of 2022-23. The intention is that this work will inform woodland creation work across Sussex for the delivery of more woodland in 'the right place' for the benefit of nature and to provide additional carbon sequestration as part of climate emergency planning.

Tree Action Fund

In late 2021, SxNP worked with South Downs National Park and the Woodland Trust on an application to the Defra/HLF Tree Action Fund. This was unsuccessful but identified an appetite across Sussex to work together in greater partnership around woodland creation in the future.



Bluebells © Dennis Hunt/Sussex Wildlife Trust

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Ensuring future success of the partnership

A priority for SxNP remains achieving financial sustainability and a robust and effective structure for the Partnership as it moves forward. A new subscription-based model is currently being discussed within the context of an emerging business plan with the aim of providing long-term security. However, this will not be in place for the coming year. Therefore, SxNP will continue its reliance on donations from partners for another year, with the aim of finalising a new business model for 2022/23.

Working Groups

Three working groups are now in place to take forward important work streams:

Health & Wellbeing Working Group, Nature Recovery Network Working Group and a newly formed BNG Working Group.

All of these Working Groups including the newly-formed BNG Working Group, have adopted a Statement of Purpose and accepted SxNP's Terms of Reference. Each directs its own work programme but provides an update and report to the SxNP Board on a quarterly basis.

Executive Team

The Executive Team continues to meet on a monthly basis to guide the day-to-day work of the Partnership. This team consists of: Kate Rice (Southern Water, Chair of SxNP); Henri Brocklebank (Sussex Wildlife Trust, Vice-Chair of SxNP); Kate Cole and Clara Lehmann (East Sussex County Council,

SxNP Secretariat); Don Baker (West Sussex County Council); Sarah Dobson (Living Coast/Brighton and Hove City Council); Julie Middleton (Consultant/Policy Lead); Gillian Branson (Business Plan Lead (voluntary)).

Secretariat

East Sussex County Council continues to provide the main secretariat and administrative support for SxNP. In addition, all working groups have designated their own secretariat.

Annual Meeting

The SxNP annual meeting is held in the final quarter of the financial year (March). This includes election of the Chair and Vice-Chair, presentation of the annual report and financial report and agreement of priorities for the year ahead. The 2022 annual meeting was held virtually but it is hoped that from 2023 onwards, annual meetings will return to in-person (face-to-face) events.

SxNP Board

The Board is comprised of every member of SxNP and continues to expand in size due to the increased impact and reach of the Partnership. A large Board is felt to encourage an inclusive and collegial culture of working across the Partnership and in the view of the Executive Committee remains manageable. The option to review the structure of the Board in the future will remain open if its composition is felt to impact its effectiveness.

Communications

SxNP's website was re-designed and launched in 2022 with significantly more content. This reflects the growth of SxNP over the past few years and provides comprehensive and up-to-date information on its work and publications.



Red Kite and sunset © Alan Price/Sussex Wildlife Trust

"Providing a great and informative space for colleagues across the systems. It is network that supports not only those working on the natural environment agenda directly but also those who it is new to or who are interested in supporting and contributing more to this field such as ESCC Public Health."

"I always look forward to these meetings. My only critique - it is just a shame that they don't happen more than once a month!"

East Sussex County Council

South East Nature Partnership



South East Nature Partnerships (SENP) brings together Local Nature Partnerships across Sussex, Kent, Surrey, Hampshire/Isle of Wight and Essex and is designed to facilitate a collaborative approach across the south east on common issues. A secretariat for the SENP is provided by Kent Nature Partnership. The Chairs of all LNPs involved meet on a quarterly basis to discuss priorities and joint working.

Work by SENP this financial year involved:

- › Meeting in October 2021 to discuss approaches to Biodiversity Net Gain across the south east
- › Joint SENP response to the Defra consultation on Local Nature Recovery Strategies
- › Exploration of habitat mapping data across the south east that may be of use for LNRS processes
- › Sharing information and approaches to nature's recovery for marine and coastal habitats and how this relates to LNRSs.

Local Authority Network

In July 2021, SxNP launched its 'Local Authority Network' designed to provide all 11 district and borough councils across Sussex with a formal connection to the work of SxNP and to act as a channel



Wild beach training © Sam Roberts/Sussex Wildlife Trust

for training and knowledge sharing on emerging issues of interest to local authorities.

Between August and December 2021, 1-2-1 meetings were carried out with all local authorities to identify priority issues and concerns. Most of these at present relate to the Environment Act and the new responsibilities this brings for local authorities, how these relate to planning and emerging work in the area of climate emergency planning.

The Network provides a programme of monthly webinars open to officials and elected council members. Topics covered since launch of the Network include:

- › Local Authority Network – launch (July 2021)
- › Developing a joint response to the Defra LNRS consultation (September 2021)
- › District licensing for Great Crested Newts (October 2021)
- › Habitat Banking for Biodiversity Net Gain (November 2021)
- › Future-proofing local plans for the Environment Act (December 2021)
- › First look at the Defra consultation on Biodiversity Net Gain (January 2022)
- › Developing a Joint Response to the Defra BNG consultation (February 2022)

- › Woodland and Planning/ launch of Woodland Opportunity Mapping (March 2022)

The LA Network has provided an excellent opportunity for district and borough councils to be more present as partners within SxNP. Several officers from Local Planning Authorities are now represented in the SxNP working groups and are thus making a direct contribution to the work of the Partnership. It has also provides a very valuable mechanism for developing a 'community of practice' between local authorities for new and emerging issues such as biodiversity net gain.



East Sussex Environment Board

Kate Rice continues to sit on **East Sussex Environment Board** in her capacity as Chair of Sussex Nature Partnership and was elected as Vice-Chair of the Board in 2021. Clara Lehmann (ESCC/SxNP Secretariat) now also provides secretariat support for the Board.

“The benefits of the Nature Partnership are massive. A focus for the many issues being faced by the environment in Sussex, opportunities for knowledge share and best practice between partnership organisations, the potential to work on joint funding and initiatives and importantly as the BNG consultation shows, an effective lobbying voice on specific key legislation and Government policy”.

Lewes District Council

Forging new links

This year SxNP has focused on making connections with new and emerging projects and initiatives being established in Sussex to support nature's recovery and encourage investment in natural capital.

- ▶ Sussex Bay – an initiative by Adur and Worthing Councils to facilitate investment in coastal and marine natural capital, supporting the natural environment and local economy along the Sussex coast
- ▶ Weald to Waves – an initiative involving landowners across Sussex with a mission to create a network of nature recovery across Sussex focusing initially on creation of a thriving corridor for nature from Ashdown Forest to the Climping Gap at Littlehampton.

Conversations to date have focused on the benefits of collaboration and the importance of working together within the context of emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

A meeting also took place this year between SxNP and the three Catchment Partnerships in Sussex to explore opportunities for more collaboration and knowledge sharing. All Catchment Partnerships are now members of SxNP as a means of better connecting them to the wider SxNP network.



NATURAL CAPITAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY (2019)

The Natural Capital Investment Strategy was adopted by SxNP in 2019. This is a comprehensive and ambitious set of actions required to secure and improve the natural capital of Sussex.

Given its limited resources, SxNP has not been able to focus on all areas of the strategy in 2021-22. However, it is used to inform SxNP work planning.

The following table demonstrates how key areas of SxNP work this year have aligned with the strategy and contributed to its delivery.



Implementation: Progress Report 2021-22

Section	Strategy	Implementation
6 i) a)	<p>Protect natural capital at risk from further loss from development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Alert mapping showing location of assets at high-risk ▶ Position these assets within local planning and spatial decision-making frameworks as 'no-go' natural capital areas – where the LNP will advocate and defend a strong policy of no loss. 	<p>Inclusion of this data set within Sussex-wide habitat mapping produced following the NE NRN mapping project with Wealden, Eastbourne and Rother (2021). This data was disseminated to all local authorities in Sussex to inform local planning processes.</p> <p>Still required: additional information on the characteristics and threats to these assets to support the mapped information.</p>
6 i) c)	<p>Reduce pressure on 'at risk' assets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Disseminate the list/maps of priority assets at risk to planners and decision-makers in Sussex ▶ Include 'at risk' assets in development of Nature Recovery Network for Sussex ▶ Identify ways in which 'at risk' assets could be incorporated into biodiversity net gain approach in Sussex. 	<p>See above. Draft habitat/NRN mapping for Sussex (including natural capital at risk) circulated to all local planning authorities for information.</p>
6 ii)	<p>The LNP leads the way in development of a strategic approach to creation of NRN across Sussex and protection of natural capital assets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Play a lead role in identification of a Nature Recovery Network for Sussex ▶ Work collectively to encourage and facilitate the preparation and implementation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies across Sussex as the mechanism through which ongoing effort and investment in enhancing the stock of natural capital will be channelled ▶ Play an active role in identifying how 'net gain for biodiversity' should be applied in Sussex and how it can be best linked to delivery of NRN ▶ Work to embed the NRN in other local spatial planning documents and processes ▶ Provide knowledge /capacity building for local authorities on NRN and net gain for biodiversity 	<p>NRN Working Group continued to gather information on how best to develop Local Nature Recovery Strategies ahead of publication of the Environment Act.</p> <p>This included development of a comprehensive response to the Defra consultation on LNRSs (late 2021) and direct feedback to Defra via participation in LNP webinars on the topic.</p> <p>At time of writing, no formal announcement of Responsible Authority for LNRS(s) in Sussex. However, SxNP has developed close working relationships with all Tier 1 local authorities involved and is thus well positioned to play a key role in LNRS preparation once these processes start.</p> <p>Messaging this year to all stakeholders has emphasised the opportunity that LNRSs will provide to create a consensus on priorities for investment in natural capital in Sussex. The role of nature-based solutions within LNRS has also been emphasised.</p> <p>BNG Working Group established to drive forward work in this area; work to date has focused on understanding how it can be linked to delivery of LNRSs; response to Defra consultation on BNG prepared in consultation with local authorities.</p> <p>The Local Authority Network was established in July 2021 to provide a formal channel for knowledge sharing/capacity building for local authorities on LNRSs and BNG. This reaches all 11 district and borough councils.</p> <p>Work on BNG across local authorities is developing a 'community of practice' in this area across local authority planning departments and environmental NGOs.</p>

APPENDIX

Section	Strategy	Implementation
7	Using natural capital to deliver priority benefits for people and the economy	Work on the concept of 'nature-based solutions' (NbS) has expanded within SxNP this year through various projects; details noted below. NbS and the concept of natural capital investment will play an important role in emerging LNRs in Sussex as a result.
	<p>Water quality and quantity Propose a formal knowledge sharing role for LNP and Catchment Partnerships, in order to collate best practice and disseminate across partners and between catchment areas in Sussex Increase engagement with Catchment Partnerships as important delivery mechanisms for natural capital investment in soil health and water quality.</p>	A meeting between SxNP and all catchment partnerships in Sussex in 2021 resulted in all CPs becoming members of SxNP to ensure they are more formally included in the work of SxNP and linked to its wider membership.
	<p>Reduced Flood Risk Identify opportunities for investment in natural capital that will make a contribution to reduction of flood risk in specific locations via natural flood management approaches</p>	Use of woodland creation for Natural Flood Management was included in methodology within Woodland Opportunity mapping project for Sussex/South Downs National Park;
	<p>Accessible Nature Work with SDNPA, parishes, local authorities and other sectors (health, local communities, business) to bring forward projects for investment in greenspaces which deliver benefits for both people and nature Formally engage with the health/ wellbeing sector and organisations working in public health, to identify opportunities and mechanisms for better connecting people and nature across Sussex.</p>	<p>LNP Greenspace project with Adur and Worthing/ Wealden District Council, ESCC and SDNPA – direct delivery of this. Will report in April 2022.</p> <p>Due to reorganisation within the health sector, this event has been postponed to later in 2022.</p>
	<p>Healthy and Productive Inshore Waters Identify the best option for LNP working on marine issues (via existing forum (SMACF) or LNP working group? Work with Sussex IFCA and others to bring forward a marine natural capital pilot project, which can be used to assess flows and metrics and assist with the development of future projects</p>	<p>The work with Sussex WT via the 3Cs project to engage with stakeholders working in coastal and marine habitat restoration is directly relevant.</p> <p>Engagement with and support for Sussex Bay initiative is directly relevant.</p>
	<p>Improved Climate Regulation Increase opportunities for investment in natural capital to protect and increase the level of carbon storage and sequestration Promote a strategic approach to new tree planting in Sussex – to ensure it is located where it will provide other benefits capital assets in Sussex</p>	<p>SELEP Funded project (Accelerating nature based solutions for carbon) is directly relevant.</p> <p>Woodland Opportunity Mapping project for Lewes and wider Sussex/SDNP area is directly relevant.</p>



Dartford Warbler and Stonechat © David Phillips/Sussex Wildlife Trust

Section	Strategy	Implementation
8	Making it happen Engagement across sectors	Local Authority Network is helping to achieve this – as is the work through Health and Wellbeing Event with the health sector. SELEP project is achieving greater engagement across the south east and with the business and landowning sectors on climate related issues. 3Cs project is expanding engagement with marine/coastal stakeholders.
	Embed natural capital in decision-making processes	NRN mapping work, BNG and Local Authority Network creating opportunities to link natural capital with planning processes.
	Learn from Pioneers in the field	As last year, the network of contacts for SxNP has grown significantly again this year. NRN Working Group and the SxNP Board have benefited from many presentations from others pioneering work on nature's recovery and LNRs elsewhere in England. The Local Authority Network webinars make use of wider contacts to provide insights from outside Sussex on a range of issues.
	Share knowledge and develop expertise within the LNP	SxNP Board meetings now showcase presentations from partners and wider network on areas of common interest. The Local Authority Network webinars have focused on knowledge sharing and developing a community of practice across local authorities on subjects such as BNG.
	Influence emerging policy and practice	SxNP engaged with national groups such as Wildlife and Countryside Link on LNRs and BNG policy this year; priority was also given on developing comprehensive responses to two key consultation documents from Defra – on LNRs and BNG.
	Develop project pipeline	SxNP project focus this year has been on developing and seeking funding for 'enabling' pieces of work (rather than direct delivery of natural capital). Examples include woodland opportunity mapping and site register work for BNG. These provide tools or methodologies for wider application – intended to enable others to plan and deliver natural capital.
	Develop metrics to confirm project outcomes	SELEP project will make some progress in understanding the potential of nature based solutions to capture carbon (and the metrics requested to measure this).
	Develop data and data management services needed	SxNP has worked closely this year with Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre on readiness for LNRs. This will continue into next year as will wider engagement on data and data management across the South East Nature Partnership.
	More detailed investment plan	No progress on this. Local Nature Recovery Strategies for Sussex will provide priorities for investment in natural capital for which a delivery plan will be required.
	Establish SxNP governance structures and functions required	SxNP has established Executive Team to provide guidance on day-to-day running of the Partnership. Board membership continues to grow but remains manageable. A business plan and funding model is a priority for the year ahead to assure financial sustainability.



Sussex Nature Partnership 2022



