

Thriving or Surviving?

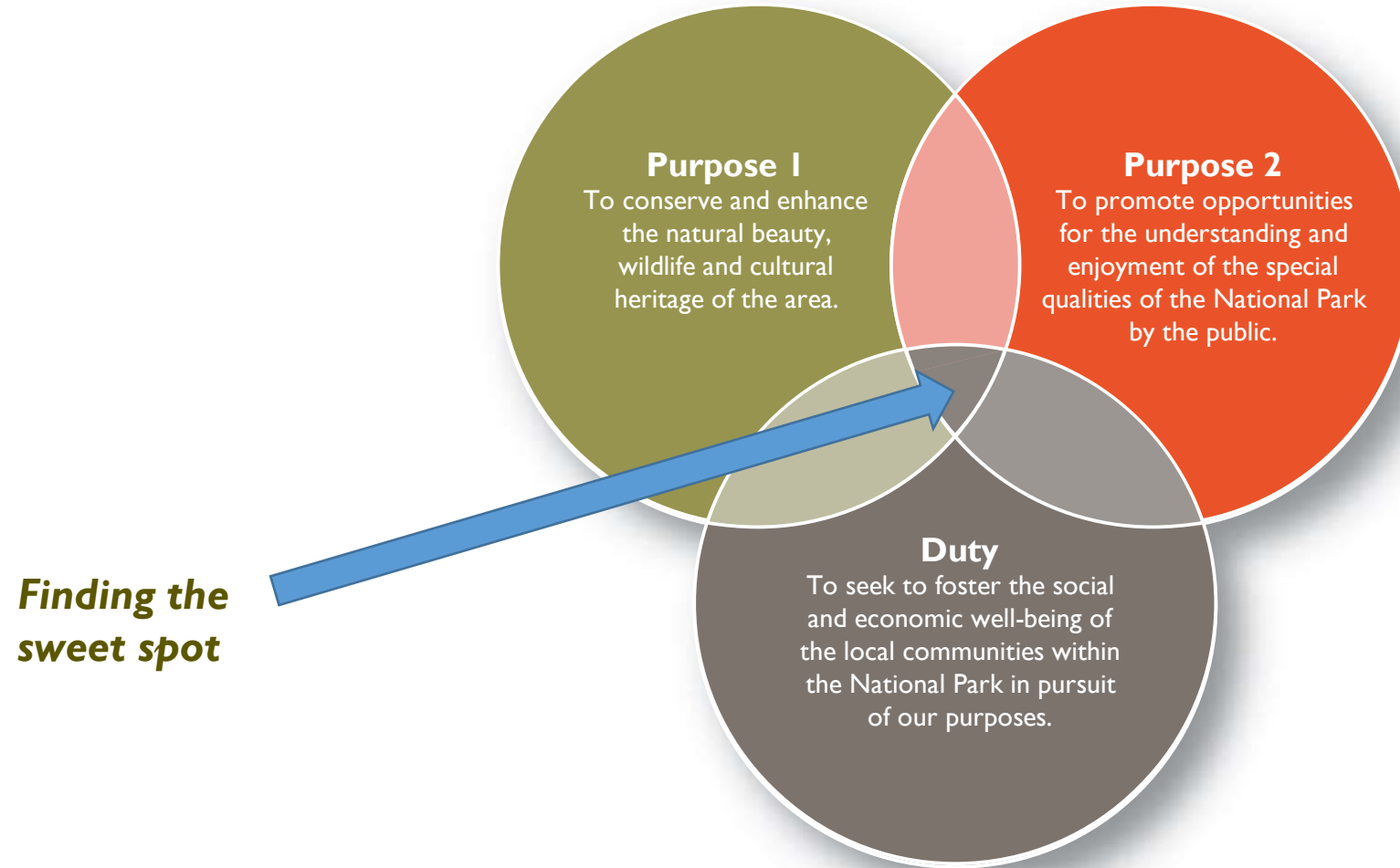
National Park & AONB Economies in Transition:

Rural Services Network SE Workshop
09.03.20



**Andrew Lee, Director of Countryside Policy & Management,
South Downs National Park Authority**

National Park Purposes and Duty



Glover Review key challenges 2020-2025

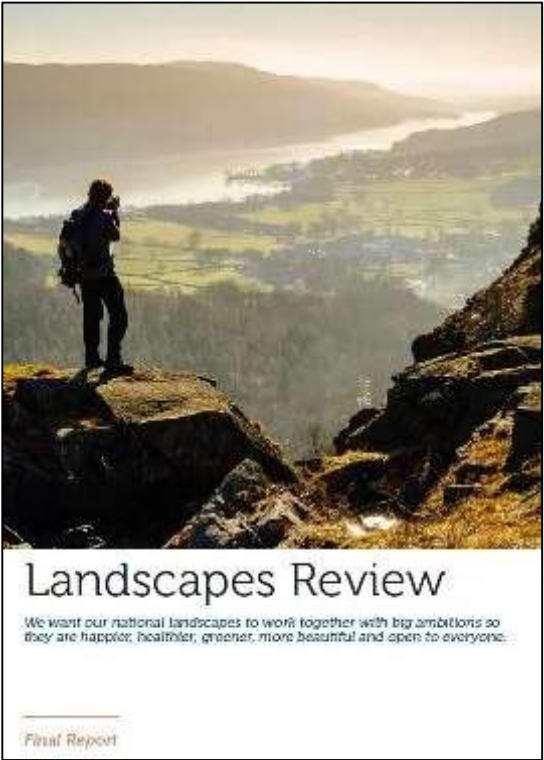
Climate change



Nature recovery



Health & inclusion



Rural economy



National Parks & AONBs

England and Wales



SE Protected Landscapes

10,000km squared;

Special landscapes;

*Representative of
wider shared rural
Issues;*

*But unique focus
and delivery
mechanisms;*

*Strong track record
and case studies;*

*Working with LAs, LEPs,
LEADER groups etc*

SOUTH EAST PROTECTED LANDSCAPES IN NUMBERS



9 protected landscapes

Over **10,000** sq kms
 =

 the built up area of London (Greater London Authority)

Nearly **800,000** living within the protected landscapes – more than the population of Glasgow, the UK's third largest city

 **85,000** businesses
 Over **150** million visitors per annum

 Over **13,000** kms of public rights of way – equivalent of walking to New York and back again!

 **12,000,000** people already living in the London City Region




Limestone beech woodlands of the Cotswolds

Jurassic limestone



Chalk river valleys of the North Wessex Downs

Watership Down



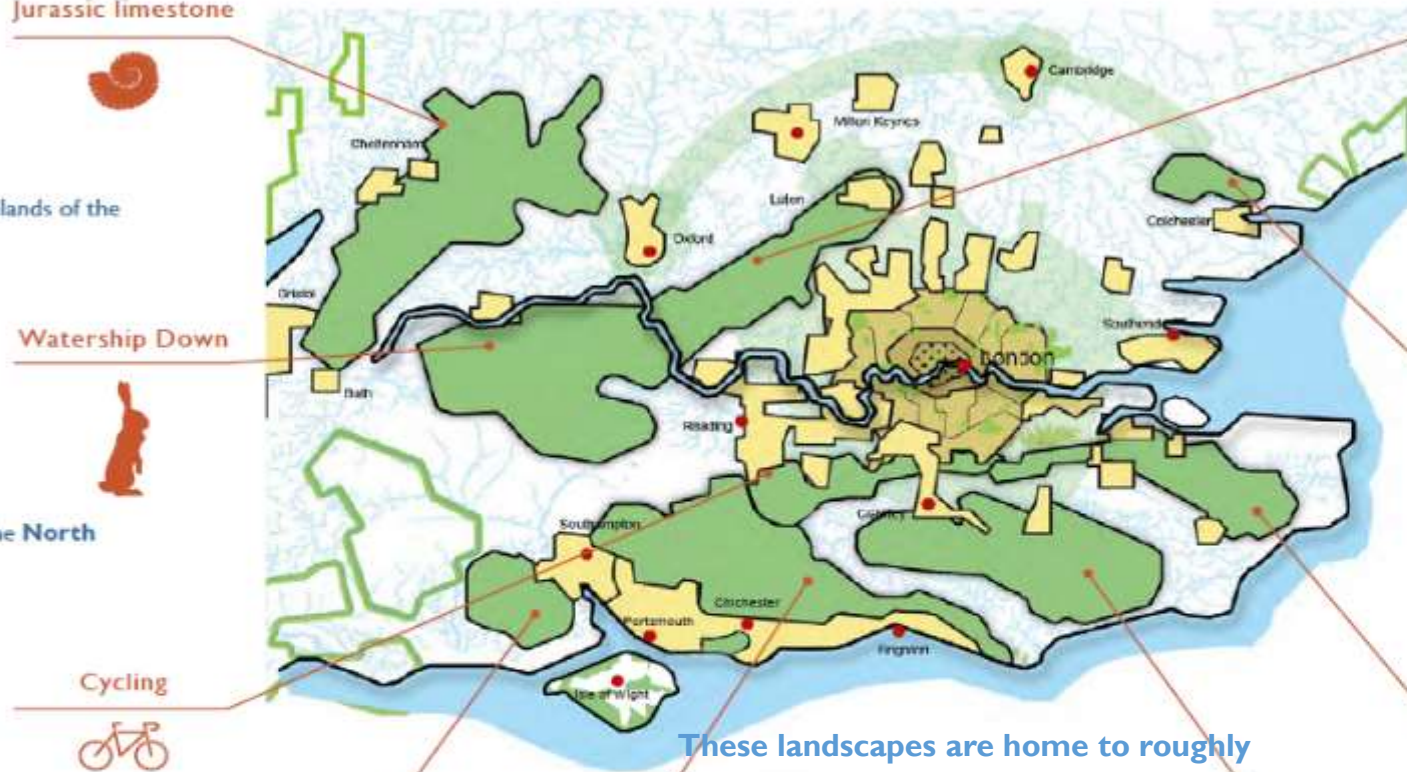
Surrey Hills – One of the world's most popular areas for cycling

Cycling



Lowland heath of the New Forest

Ponies



Chalk



Charming working landscape of the Chilterns

River Stour



Dedham Vale, only 80 miles from the City of London; inspired Constable and Gainsborough

Agriculture



Kent Downs, enchanting dry valleys meeting the sea at the White Cliffs of Dover

Woodlands



High Weald – One of the best surviving medieval landscapes in Northern Europe

These landscapes are home to roughly 85,500 businesses, attract 150 million tourists each year and offer incredible cultural, environmental and aesthetic diversity and value.

4 market towns



The quintessentially southern English rolling hills of the South Downs

Thriving or Surviving?

From:

*Unsustainable;
Ageing;
High carbon;
Nature depleted;
Subsidy dependent;
Fragmented;
Disconnected;*

?

Land based businesses;

Non land-based businesses;

Communities & services

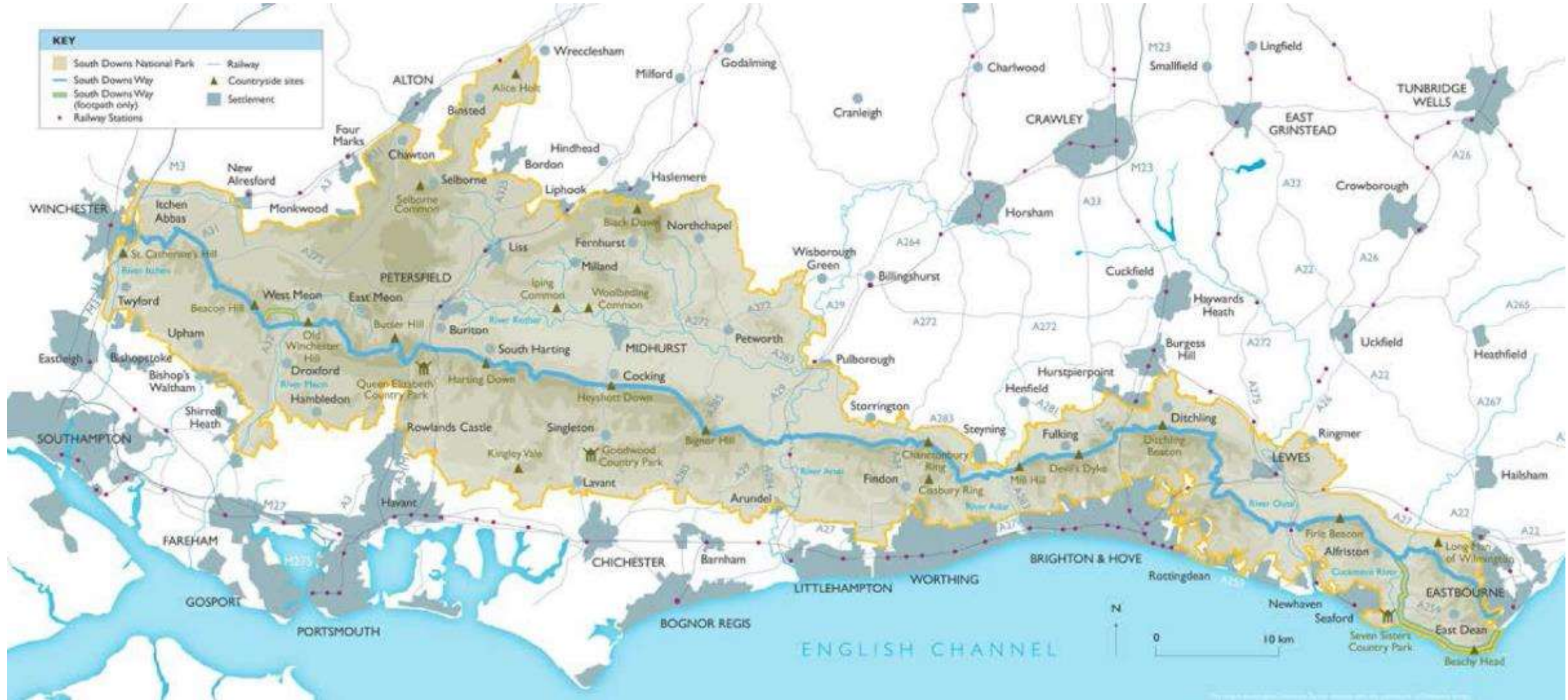
To:

*Sustainable;
Balanced;
Low carbon;
Nature restored;
Independent;
Integrated;
Connected;*

?



SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK



Economic Profile

AN ECONOMIC INSIGHT INTO THE SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK



8,000 businesses in the National Park

98% of business; micro or small category



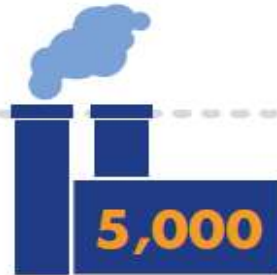
over 350 food and drink businesses



only 5%



of visitor economy in the National Park is accommodation enterprise



5,000 manufacturing jobs



23% of residents are managers, directors and senior officials

8% of enterprises in the National Park are in Arts, entertainment and recreation



5,500 jobs in education

43% of residents commute outside of the park to work



3,000 people employed in...



agriculture

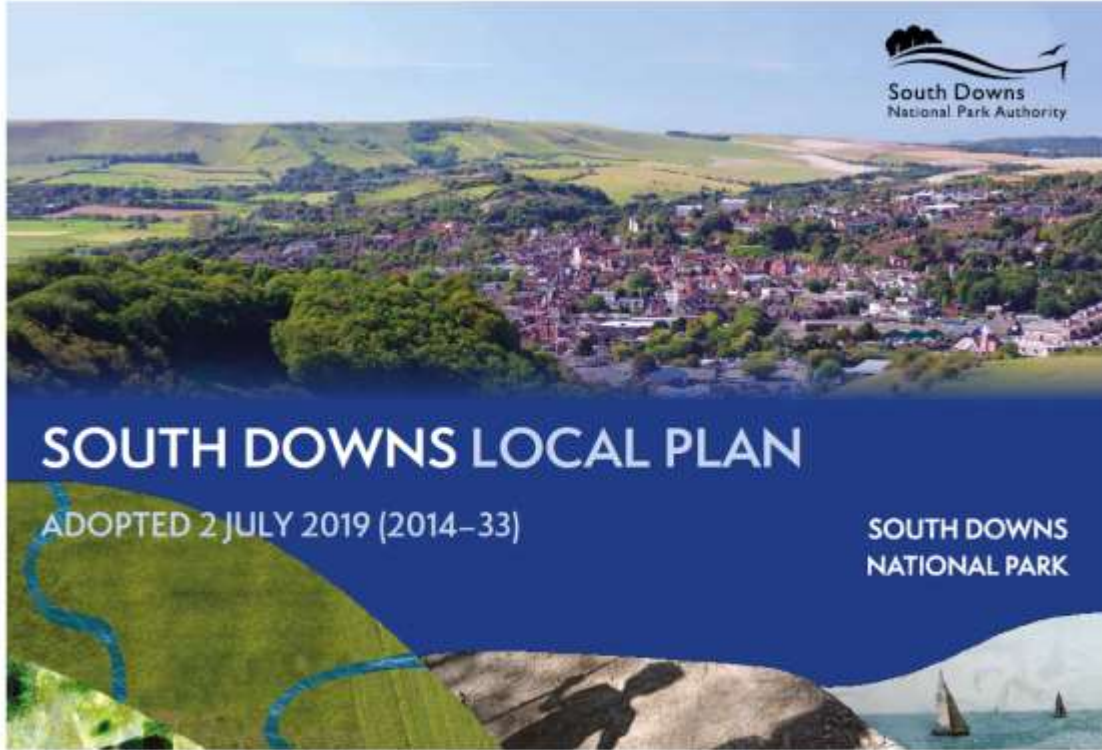


forestry &

fisheries



representing **1 in 10** jobs in the National Park



Policy framework:



**Rural Issues are
hard wired in our DNA**



Eg. Viticulture

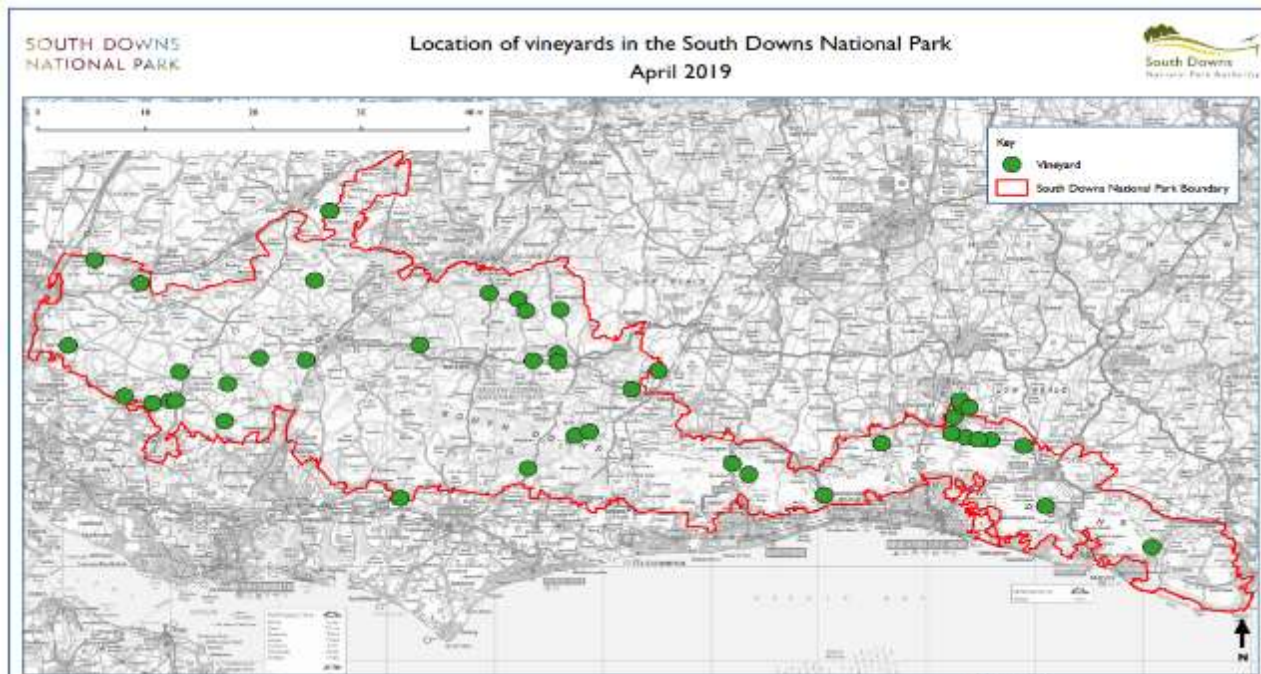
Context : 80% English vineyards in S Downs,
Surrey Hills and Kent Downs

(South Downs:27 in 2016  c50 in 2019)

Projects: Viticulture Study (led by SDNPA)

(includes growth impact assessment:
landscape, economic and social);

Defra “Test and Trials” (led by Kent Downs
AONB)



Outputs: Case Studies
Technical Advice Note
Natural Capital Account
Advice for Defra on ELMS

Eg) Neighbourhood Plans:

56 active Neighbourhood Plans (29 Made);

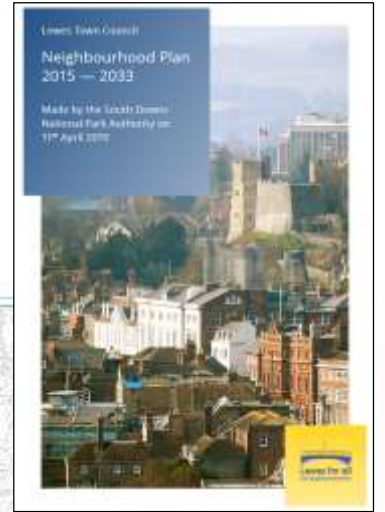
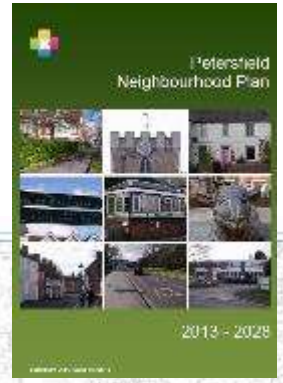
Deliver more than 50% of the SDNP Housing allocations;

Over 100 other community led plans:

30+ Village Design Statements (6 adopted)

3 Local Landscape Character Assessments

over 70 Parish Plans or Town Health checks



Eg Affordable Housing

Average price 97% higher than wider Housing Market Area

***** affordable homes needed per annum**

Free pre-application advice;

Helping CLTs to find acceptable sites;

Working with Rural Estates to bring forward sites;

SDNPA grants available of up to £30k per home;

Leading a national pilot study to access Homes England funds for small scale rural housing delivery



Eg) Tourism and visitor economy

South Downs :

18 million visits per year,
very car dependent;

Average spend per head very
low; Lack of
accommodation;

Encourage stay longer, spend
more, reduce footprint;

Discover England National
Park Experiences



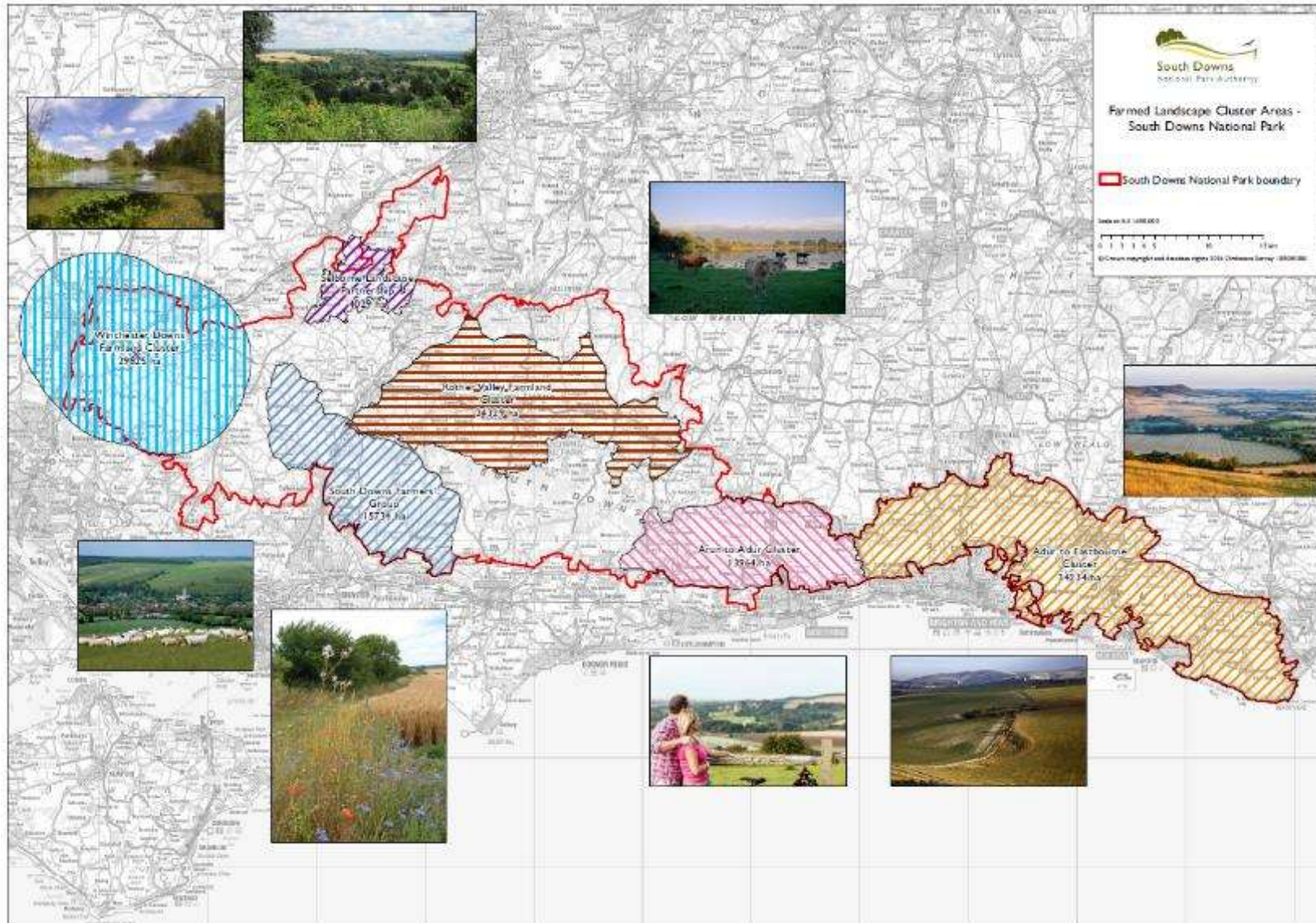
Kent Downs

Green Pilgrimage Extending North Downs
Way / Pilgrims Way officially to Winchester
and linking with routes to Rome

Interreg Experience project promoting
sustainable rural tourism off season linked
to NDW



Eg) Farm Clusters



Formed by farmers who decide objectives;

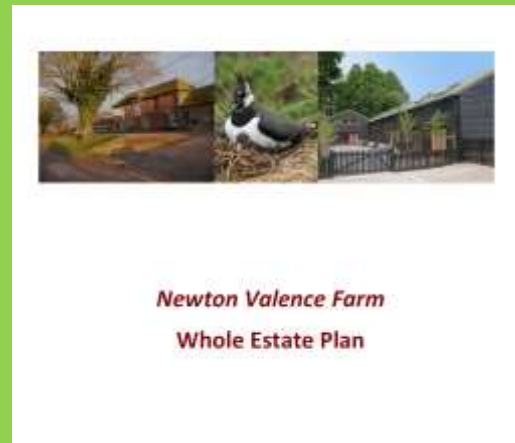
Currently 6 clusters in South Downs with 2 more emerging;

More than 15 in wider SE;

Valuable link between farmers, their communities and, via Protected Landscapes, Defra;

Crucial for Nature Recovery and Climate Action, ELMS and Diversification.

Eg) Whole Estate Plans



In Conclusion

For National Park & AONB landscapes in the SE to thrive their communities and businesses also need to be resilient and prosperous.

For this they need:

- *Payments for public goods;*
- *Opportunities to diversify*
- *Affordable Housing*
- *Employment Space*
- *Community Assets*
- *Holiday Accommodation*
- *Digital Infrastructure*



There is a great opportunity for the Protected landscapes and Local Authorities to work together on this rural agenda, particularly as the natural assets within PLs provide many of the benefits which improve quality of life and resilience.



Thank You

andrew.lee@southdowns.gov.uk

<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/>

