

**Eastbourne Borough Council: Whole Estate Plan 2020 - 2045
Action Plan Update**

Project name	Update January 2025
Safe and sustainably manage woodland	Advantage is being take to increase biodiversity with the creation of new glades, mixed species replanting and natural regeneration. Woodland management plans have been created which takes into account the ash dieback issues.
Scrub control	Scrub control has taken place this winter by both contractors and volunteer/officer work (Whitebread Hollow and Belle Tout respectively). More due to take place throughout the winter period. Grazing still taking place, and review of grazing arrangements ongoing.
Explore opportunities for social prescribing schemes on the Estate	Proposed development of Black Robin will help support social prescribing opportunities through education, leisure and culture activities.
Prepare the transition away from the current subsidy regime	<p>CS agreement for the Open Downland is now live and on going - management of the open downland is being adjusted to reflect this. The Council is looking to purchase a new Cut and collect machine to better assist with habitat recovery at scale, as well as previously mentioned grazing adjustments. All farming tenants are currently in management schemes including Higher Level Stewardship and Countryside Stewardship Scheme. Some tenants have investigated capital grants across their holdings for new fencing.</p> <p>The Rural Payment agency replaced the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) in England with delinked payments in 2024. The amounts paid to farmers will decrease each year by way of progressive reductions. 2027 will be the last year that farmers receive delinked payments.</p>
Promote best practice in sustainable land management to protect the aquifer	<p>Clusters are awarded funding to achieve greater improvements in bio-diversity, nutrient neutrality and importantly water quality on a greater scale than individual holdings could on their own. A leaflet inviting farmers to the 2024/2025 South Downs National Park Authority Farmer's Breakfast/Supper events was circulated to the farmers in October 2024.</p> <p>For the EBC managed open downland the Council is also currently working with Natural England and local partners on the proposed National Nature Reserve (NNR) expansion. SE water is a partner in this, and part of the proposals link to protection of the aquifer.</p>
Creation by the Council of a group or body to help fundraise and take projects forward	Future possible fundraising entity to be kept under review.
Prepare for the rollout of the new Environmental Land Management System	Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier (CSHT) has been secured for the open downland and woodland, EBC worked with others, including NE and FC over 2023 and the scheme is now secured and live from January 2024. The scheme lasts 5 - 10 years. Draft Management plan for the Open Downland written Sep 2024 and is currently being reviewed to properly incorporate the CS agreement
Maximise the biodiversity and amenity value of the Estate woodlands	The EBC managed areas of woodland are included in the secured CSHT grant, with measures such as ride management (to provide varied habitat structure) proposed. Still exploring opportunities for dewpond restoration at Old Mansion Close. This work is ongoing.

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Contribute to a Nature Recovery Network	EBC continue to be involved in the LNRS as a 'Supporting Authority' and have regular catch ups with ESCC, who are the Responsible Authority. Mapping of habitat maintenance and restoration undertaken for our grant scheme, with advice from Natural England specialists. Working with other landowners/partners in the local area as part of the proposed National Nature Reserve (NNR) expansion project.
Explore opportunities on the Estate to deliver the biodiversity net gain for Eastbourne.	EBC BNG work ongoing, in early stages. There is a Technical Advice Note for BNG (approved Sept 2021) - however SDNPA are the LPA for the downland. SDNPA also have a BNG TAN. BNG is now mandatory (from 12/02/2024) and further guidance has become available from Government since last year. Cornish Farm to be utilised as a BNG site.
Improving the Visitor Centre offering at Beachy Head	Expression of Interest launched for new tenant for the property. Due to consider responses late February.
Improving the educational offering	As part of Changing Chalk a Chalk Life Ranger is working on engagement and education opportunities at Butts Lane Meadow. Black Robin development will support education and culture learning. Planned increase volunteering offer across the Estate e.g. conservation volunteers. Conservation volunteers first official task taking place on 29th January - as year progresses, will look at non-practical opportunities i.e. surveys and planting skills. Also in discussions with Gary Webster to recruit monument monitoring volunteers.
Diversification and re-purposing of redundant farm building	A successful Levelling Up Fund bid was submitted for development of the Black Robin main site to include new/redeveloped buildings providing culture and education opportunities (incl. art/workshop/shop/accommodation/additional employment/improved farm buildings), plus relocation of the farmer to Ringwood Farm. Heads of Terms being agreed with Towner for the new hub and finalising designs alongside cost analysis of project.