

## Sustainability

*This is one of four short documents setting out the strategic approach of the Friends of the South Downs to tackling climate change.*

The ecological definition of sustainability originated with the Brundtland Report in 1987, which describes sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. The UN Sustainable Development Goals form the framework for improving the lives of populations around the world and mitigating the hazardous man-made effects of climate change. It calls for action on Climate Change, Life Below Water and Life on Land. Also, they call for more sustainable practices in using the earth’s natural resources.

In the context of the South Downs we consider that sustainability is a goal which should be attainable in the following areas:

**The planning system**, - Sustainable development is central to the planning strategy and policies set out in the Local Plan. Where planning permission is to be granted conditions should be set upon a development which requires access to sustainable transport, renewable energy provision, the use of sustainable building materials and requirements to minimise the impact on the environment including provisions for sustaining and enhancing the biodiversity of a site.

**Transport links** – Development should be of a form and location that minimises the need to travel and use of private cars; where new transport links are to be provided, they should include the provision of sustainable forms of transport such as rail, bus, cycling and walking.

**Farming** - we support a sustainable approach to farming which minimises the use of chemicals which may be harmful to the environment and to reduce 'food miles' by way of encouraging locally sourced food and farming products. We will encourage farming techniques that avoid the intensive cultivation of farmland which normally can only be sustained using chemicals and fertilisers.

**Woodland and forestry management** - we support the use of natural renewable materials which can be obtained by a managed approach to forests and woodland.

**Rivers and water courses** - these should be protected from excessive abstraction and pollutants and chemicals to provide clean water sources and habitats for aquatic life which support the natural landscape.

**Access to the countryside** - we support sustainable methods of transport to access our beautiful countryside and the South Downs. We encourage rail and bus companies to work with the Park authority and other local authorities to enable greater use of public transport to access the South Downs Way and other public rights of way across the Downs. We support the creation of greater public access to the countryside through additional access land and public rights of way.

**Marine environment** - a key feature of Sussex is its coastline and the National Park has one of the most beautiful and iconic stretches of coastline in the world within its boundary. We would wish to encourage sustainable fishing practices and measures that prevent the pollution of our seawater either by chemicals and other materials entering the sea; especially plastic and other litter which endangers marine life.

See also our strategic approach to tackling climate change in our linked documents: Carbon, Environment and Education.

[See also our planning policy documents.](#)