

Brighton & Lewes Downs Biosphere – Summary Briefing

We aim to create a world-class environment, that is economically successful and enjoyed by all – forever.

Biosphere Basics:

- Biosphere Reserves are internationally recognised by UNESCO as “sites of excellence” to balance conservation and socioeconomic development between nature and people, and explore and demonstrate innovative approaches as learning sites for sustainable development.
- There are 621 sites across 117 countries that make up the World Network of Biosphere Reserves; the UK presently has five sites, of which three are active modern Biosphere sites: North Devon (England), Dyfi (Wales), and Galloway & Southern Ayrshire (Scotland).
- Biosphere Reserves are not statutory restrictive protected areas, but are places where people work together to pursue “win-win” solutions that improve our quality of life and local economy whilst enhancing the local environment.

Brighton & Lewes Downs Biosphere:

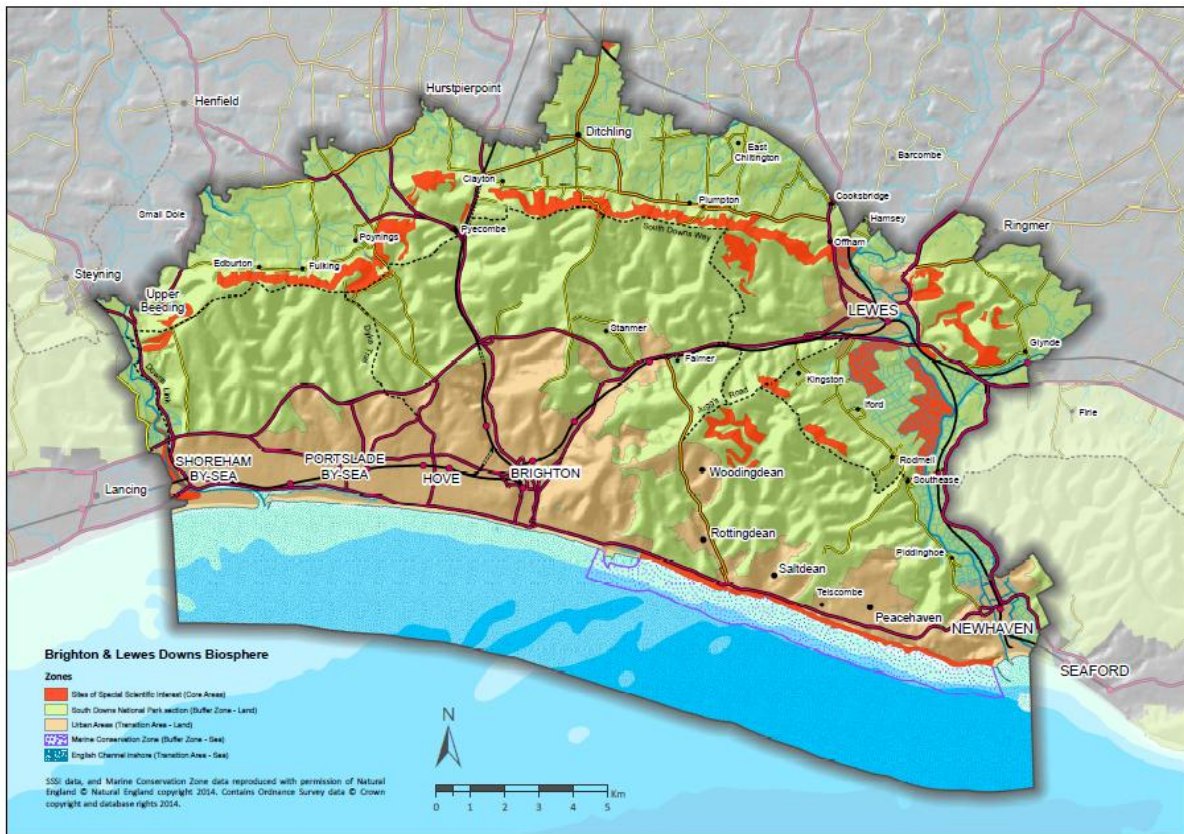
- Our Biosphere has three objectives to be jointly delivered:
 1. Conserve and enhance nature
 2. Support human development that is sustainable
 3. Encourage environmental knowledge, learning and awareness and engagement
- The Biosphere Partnership’s priorities for action to make improvements are: environmental awareness; outdoor recreation & eco-tourism; water use and quality; and green space networks.
- Our Biosphere brings together three distinct but connected environments:
 1. Countryside – which is part of the South Downs National Park (our Biosphere’s ‘Buffer Zone’, and including ‘Core Areas’ – Sites of Special Scientific Interest)
 2. Coast – extending 2 nautical miles out to sea in the English Channel (our Biosphere’s marine ‘Buffer Zone’ and ‘Transition Area’)
 3. City & Towns – Brighton & Hove, Shoreham, Lewes, Newhaven, Peacehaven, Telscombe, Southwick and Shoreham Beach (our Biosphere’s land ‘Transition Area’)
- The Brighton & Lewes Downs Biosphere Partnership is made up of around 40 different local organisations (see logos below), including all of the local authorities as well as other public bodies and representatives from the voluntary, private and educational sectors.
- When inscribed by UNESCO in June 2014, our Biosphere will be: one of only a handful of sites with major urban settlements worldwide; the first completely new site in the UK in almost 40 years; the only site in south-east England.

Facts & Figures:

- Almost 1500 local people have signed up as “Friends of the Biosphere” supporters.
- The Biosphere project has been presented at 150 public events/meetings over 2 years.
- Almost 1,800 individuals inputted to the public consultation run in early 2013, of which around 95% supported the Biosphere proposal and its objectives.
- Our Biosphere area (see map below) is the block of land and sea between the River Adur at Shoreham in the west and the River Ouse at Newhaven in the east; it covers 389 square kilometres (or 150 square miles), an area just larger than the Isle of Wight.
- 371,500 people live here, and the area receives around 12 million visitors each year.
- The area has an approximate economic value of £7 billion.
- Thousands of species of wildlife occur, including >200 international conservation priorities.
- Internationally important wildlife habitats include chalk grassland on the South Downs, vegetated shingle beaches, and undersea chalk reefs.
- The local environment provides us with many of our daily needs, including clean water, fresh air, local food, and open space for recreation.

Biosphere Benefits (potential):

- Improved quality of life through a healthier environment – helping nature to help ourselves
- Strengthening the economy by making the area a more attractive place to visit
- Heightened profile of a world-class accolade, enabling increased marketing and funding opportunities
- Opportunities to attract and create new enterprises and jobs in environmental industries
- Added value and demand for local and sustainable Biosphere produce and services
- A cleaner environment to improve health and reduce the treatment costs of water and air pollution – bringing the countryside to town
- Improved partnership working between local bodies to raise environmental quality
- Foster a stronger sense of community awareness, identity and pride in the local environment through public engagement and environmental education
- Enable applied research and monitoring by local academic institutions to address conservation and development challenges
- Promote collaboration and knowledge transfer through the global Biosphere network



BRIGHTON & LEWES DOWNS BIOSPHERE PARTNERSHIP:

