

Report to	Governance Committee
Date	18 September 2014
By	Performance and Project Manager
Title of Report	Quarter 1 Performance Report
Purpose of Report	To report performance for Quarter 1 of 2014/15

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

- 1) Note and approve the Quarter 1 Performance Report**
 - 2) Consider if it wishes to make any recommendations to Policy and Programme Committee arising from the report.**
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA), as a publicly accountable body, is responsible for monitoring its performance. The Governance Committee has terms of reference which include "... to ensure the robustness of risk management and performance management arrangements; and to agree the internal audit plan and annual report and receive progress and other relevant internal audit reports.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to update the Governance Committee on performance during Quarter 1. This report should be read in conjunction with the Budget Monitoring Report elsewhere on this agenda.

2. Background

- 2.1 This report is for performance against delivery of actions in the Operational Plan. It also provides an overview of progress on our major projects. Performance measures for the 2014-17 Corporate Plan will be reviewed at the end of Quarter 4. Evaluations of a number of projects are reported separately on this agenda.
- 2.2 The tables at **Appendix 1** show progress on deliverables. Progress on projects is shown at **Appendix 2**. The RAG (Red, Amber, Green) status shows if a deliverable or project is on track or not. The RAG status is entered manually by staff and is based on an assessment including key deliverables and achievement of targets as well as whether the budget is on or off track. The arrows within the coloured sections show the direction of travel from the previous Quarter. Items with a RAG status that is red or amber for the first time are set out in the exception report at paragraph 3. For information the Corporate Plan objectives are set out at **Appendix 3**.

3. Exception report

- 3.1 The exception report covers the measures and actions in the corporate plan. Members will note that some actions or measures are not due to be measured this year, or this quarter. For this first time, this performance report also provides information about progress on our major projects.
- 3.2 Generally speaking as would be expected at this stage in the year most measures and actions are green.
- 3.3 I measure is amber.
 - 3.3.1 I.10a is amber, this is the measure for Conservation Area management Plans. The

details are in **Appendix I**.

3.3.2 4.5.3 The figures for validated planning applications are lower than target. Officers are currently working with some of the host authorities and are also looking at our own internal processes to better understand the reasons for the fall in overall performance. However, it is understood that increased workloads, reductions in staff resources, changes in staffing structures and recruitment difficulties are all having some adverse impact. Officers are also refining monitoring to ensure that performance is only assessed for valid cases and not for those that contain insufficient information to enable validation to take place.

3.3.3 1.8a The figures for appeals determined in favour of SDNPA are also below target, nationally, around two thirds of all planning appeals are dismissed and current performance (for the whole of 2013/14) within the SDNPA is consistent with that performance. Last year, around 66% of all appeals were determined in favour of the SDNPA and given that a significantly higher proportion of those appeals were determined after Public Inquiries or Informal Hearings (rather than the simpler written representation procedure) that performance is considered to be particularly satisfying.

3.3.4 For this quarter, the 20% performance on major applications determined within 13 weeks appears disappointing. However, only 10 major applications were determined in the quarter, of which 2 (20%) were determined within 13 weeks, the other 8 taking longer. Major cases are nearly always more complex and they often need more time to be processed, negotiated for the right outcomes to be achieved. There can be delays while Section 106 or other Agreements are completed. Some applicants agree a longer period of time for them to be determined - this is now quite common practice for major cases. Officers will be working with host authorities to better understand why performance in this area appears to have dipped within this quarter and to see how this can be improved in the future.

3.4 **Appendix 2** sets out detailed information for current projects over £5,000 and for the Local Plan evidence projects. No projects are red and 13 % are amber (a total of 7). The following themes emerge as the main reasons for delays in the projects:

- Some projects were delayed because partners needed time to secure additional funds.
- Some were delayed due to delays in agreeing contract arrangements. Some were caused due to knock on delays from other projects.
- Some problems arose because of unsatisfactory work or the need for revised drafts of proposals by contractors when they were deemed unsatisfactory by SDNPA staff.
- In some cases delay was due to taking extra time to carry out additional consultation.

3.5 Members are asked to note QI performance, and whether they wish to make any recommendations to staff to implement as a result of this report.

4. Actions from Annual Governance Statement

4.1 **Appendix 4** shows the actions from the Annual Governance Statement and the progress to date. Members are asked to note progress.

5. Resources

5.1 There are no direct resource implications from reporting on performance. The Committee should note that financial monitoring is part of the budget monitoring process. Any financial implications arising from any additional recommendations made at Committee would require funding to be identified.

6. Risk management

6.1 There are no specific risks associated with reporting performance information, indeed not to report performance could pose a reputational risk to the organisation.

7. Human Rights, Equalities, Health and Safety

7.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

8. Sustainability

8.1 Reporting performance information will contribute to the fourth sustainability principle set out in the SDNPA Sustainability Strategy; promoting good governance by providing information to which members of the public have access, contributing to transparency and openness. It also contributes to principle five using evidence to support proposals. Evidence about performance can potentially be used to justify developing alternative policy options or different approaches. There may also be some minimal impact in terms of reduction in use of paper as Officers get used to using the Aspireview system to record information.

9. External Consultees

9.1 None.

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Appendices

1 – Performance Report

2 – Project progress update

3 – Corporate Plan Objectives

4 – Actions from Annual Governance Statement

SDNPA Consultees

Director of Corporate Services; Director of Planning, Director of Strategy and Partnerships; Director of Operations; Head of Finance BHCC; Deputy Monitoring Officer; Legal Services; Audit Manager BHCC; SDNPA Heads of Team.

Background Documents

None

Corporate Plan 2014-17 Objectives

Objective	Page reference for indicators
<p>Objective - 1 A thriving living landscape We will work with a range of major projects and partnerships to deliver key outcomes which conserve and enhance the landscape, biodiversity and heritage assets in the South Downs National Park. We will also manage the impacts of large-scale and cumulative small-scale developments.</p>	
<p>PMP 1 The landscape character of the South Downs, its special qualities and local distinctiveness have been conserved and enhanced by effectively managing the land and the negative impacts of development and cumulative change.</p>	17
<p>PMP 3 A well managed and better connected network of habitats and increased population and distribution of priority species now exist in the National Park.</p>	17
<p>PMP 4 The condition and status of cultural heritage assets and their settings (including monuments, buildings, towns and buried remains) is significantly enhanced, many more have been discovered and they contribute positively to local distinctiveness and sense of place.</p>	17
<p>Objective 2 - People connected with places We will promote opportunities for awareness, learning and engagement, seek to ensure quality access management and accessibility and support the development of sustainable tourism.</p>	
<p>PMP 5 Outstanding visitor experiences are underpinned by a high quality access and sustainable transport network, supporting improved health and wellbeing.</p>	19
<p>PMP6 Widespread understanding of the special qualities of the National Park and the benefits it provides.</p>	19
<p>PMP 7 The range and diversity of traditional culture and skills has been protected and there is an increase in contemporary arts and crafts that are inspired by the Special Qualities of the National Park.</p>	19
<p>PMP 8 More responsibility and action is taken by visitors, residents and businesses to conserve and enhance the special qualities and use resources more wisely.</p>	19
<p>Objective 3 – Towards a sustainable future We will provide information and support to help communities better understand their environment and the impact of their action on it and make sure they are engaged in the design and development of their local surroundings. We will support the growth of sustainable local businesses.</p>	
<p>PMP 9 Communities in the National Park are more sustainable with an appropriate provision of housing to meet local needs and improved access to essential services and facilities.</p>	21
<p>PMP 10 A diverse sustainable economy has developed that provides a wide variety of business and employment opportunities, many of which are positively linked to the special qualities of the National Park.</p>	21
<p>PMP 11 Local people have access to skilled employment and training opportunities.</p>	21

Objective	Page reference for indicators
<p>Objective 4 – An efficient and effective organisation that supports partnership working</p> <p>We will manage our own resources to deliver high levels of customer services and value for money. We will seek to reduce the environmental impact of our activities. We will support and develop staff, Members and Volunteers to enable them to perform effectively</p>	
<p>4.1 Deliver an effective development management service that achieves high levels of customer satisfaction.</p>	23
<p>4.2 Develop project governance mechanisms that increase the capacity of the organisation to deliver outcomes and seek to maximise external funding opportunities.</p>	23
<p>4.3 Staff, Members and Volunteers feel valued and have access to training and development opportunities.</p>	23
<p>4.4 Develop strong relationships that allow partners to increase their capacity to effectively deliver the shared outcomes in the PMP.</p>	23

Annual Governance Statement 2014-15 actions and progress

AGS action	Progress
Establish a register for Officer interests below SMT level	This has been written into the Officer Code of Conduct and work to establish the register is being aligned with the annual cycle of HR processes.
Review Officer Code of Conduct	Revised Officer Code of Conduct approved by SMT and communicated to all staff in August 2014. Action closed.
Review of Risk Process	Work is underway to embed risk processes in the organisation via SMT and the Heads of teams Meetings. A workshop is to be organised to develop and document the Authority's risk appetite to further inform this process.
Online publication of register of interests	Members declarations of interests is currently published on-line. Further online publication of appropriate registers is being investigated.
Review and update of performance management framework (Aspireview)	This is underway and should be complete before the end of the year.