

Report to	<b>Policy &amp; Programme Committee</b>
Date	<b>30 January 2014</b>
By	<b>Director of Strategy &amp; Partnerships</b>
Title of Report	<b>Shared Identity Project Progress and Forward Plan Update</b>
Purpose of Report	<b>To give an overview of project, progress to date and project plan activity going forward</b>

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**Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:**

- 1) Note progress to date against agreed project plan activity and milestones**
  - 2) Note next steps of the project**
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**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This report gives an overview of the project to develop a shared visual identity for the South Downs National Park which aims to enable partners, communities, farmers, estates, local businesses and other stakeholders to voluntarily create consistent, powerful and coherent communications about the National Park.
- 1.2 The project is not about the corporate identity for the SDNPA. It will create a set of communications tools for shared use, which will add value to the communications and branding work of partners and stakeholders for the benefit of those living, working and visiting the National Park.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 The development of a shared identity, rather than an SDNPA led marketing campaign is the preferred means to deliver one of the overarching goals of the 2012–2018 Communications and Engagement Strategy, which was adopted by Members in 2013: “To raise the profile of the SDNP and encourage awareness, understanding, enjoyment and care by the public”.
- 2.2 The process and delivery of a shared identity is underpinned by the Guiding Principles agreed by SDNPA in its shadow year (“bringing people together to achieve more for the South Downs through combined action; and building effective partnerships”).
- 2.3 The 2014 – 2019 Partnership Management Plan lists the development of a shared identity and its use by stakeholders as a delivery framework example to achieve Outcome 10: “A diverse and sustainable economy with a wide range of business and employment opportunities, many positively linked with the special qualities of the National Park”.

**3. Governance and Process**

- 3.1 This project is Member led and is also being co-developed with partners. A Member Steering group includes Sue Saville, Jo Carr and Doug Jones, working alongside the Communications & Engagement Manager and the Campaigns & Identity Project Manager.
- 3.2 An External Communications & Engagement Working Group has been established to work with the SDNPA. The group is chaired by Sue Saville and comprises a range of individuals who have expertise, resources and/or networks critical to the successful delivery of a shared identity and other communications and engagement matters of shared importance, including shared identity and can help with other aspects of communications & engagement. Such partners include the Forestry Commission, Southern Water, Local Authority Tourism officers, the RSPB and National Trust.

- 3.3 The project is being managed on a day to day basis by the Campaigns and Identity Project Manager and led by the Communications and Engagement Manager.
- 3.4 A consultant was tendered for in July 2013 to provide external expertise for the project. Thinking Place and Hidden Britain, a very experienced consortium, was appointed.
- 3.5 The shared identity project has four key phases:
- phase 1 - developing the evidence base;
  - phase 2 - creating and writing the 'story' which underpins the shared identity;
  - phase 3 - creating the visual language and guidelines which express the shared identity;
  - phase 4 - developing a shared delivery strategy to be adopted by SDNPA, partners and stakeholders leveraging the best use of available resources.
- 3.6 Phase one – developing the evidence base - is complete. This was an extensive research and engagement exercise to review existing documentation, talk to stakeholders and fill any gaps. It has included:
- reviewing key previous consultation documentation such as the Visitor Survey ;
  - carrying out around fifty one-to-one interviews with SDNPA Members and key stakeholders;
  - six community workshops across the National Park;
  - interviewing 180 visitors and residents at thirteen key locations;
  - holding two workshops for staff and volunteers;
  - holding one workshop for Members and the South Downs Partnership ;
  - online surveys for staff, Members, volunteers and the public - yielding 400+ responses.
- 3.7 Phase two is scheduled for completion on 4 February 2014. Phase three is expected to be complete by late March 2014. The visual identity is planned to go to the June 2014 NPA meeting for approval. Phase four-implementation by SDNPA and partners is expected from late summer 2014 onwards. Sue Saville presented on the consultants interim findings at a joint staff & Member meeting on 25 November 2013.

#### **4. Resources**

- 4.1 Costs are being met by the agreed £50k allocated for shared identity development in the 2013/14 Communications and Engagement budget. The tender was awarded based on three key factors –lowest fee in the open tender process, most value for the money in terms of the level of engagement and consultation as part of the project process, and the most experience of successful development and implementation of 'place' identities.
- 4.2 The Campaigns & Identity Project Manager, who leads on day-to-day project management, is 80% externally funded through the Department for Transport's Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF).
- 4.3 To maximise the impact of the shared identity, partner and stakeholder resources will be leveraged where possible by working with others to integrate the shared identity, where it adds value to pre-planned projects.
- 4.4 The 2013/14 Communications & Engagement Budget also includes the provision of public workshops to train communities and businesses on how to use the new tools which will help create ambassadors for the shared identity.
- 4.5 There is no direct SDNPA budget allocated to delivery in 2014/15. Instead, the strategy is that existing pre-planned projects, such as our publications, will benefit from the investment in the shared activity by incorporating the new look and feel at the appropriate time and in the appropriate way.
- 4.6 The unique approach of the appointed consultant allows for elements of the share identity output to be used in a way that is appropriate to each partner. This enables it to be widely taken up and to be integrated with their pre-planned projects, such as re-branding of visitor centres, rather than needing large amounts of stand-alone investment.

## **5. Risk management**

- 5.1 There is a risk of failing that we fail to achieve consensus between SDNPA Members and key partners such as the External Communications & Engagement Working Group. This is being mitigated by a robust engagement process, allowing as many Members, staff, partners and stakeholders to participate and contribute as possible to own the output.
- 5.2 The risk of divergent and subjective points of view on the outputs is being further mitigated by ongoing stakeholder communication about the importance of the project, and clarifying partner and stakeholder needs and wants from the shared identity.

## **6. Human Rights, Equalities, Health and Safety**

- 6.1 Inclusivity issues are being addressed by engaging with a wide range of stakeholders, through a variety of methods e.g. online surveys for those that find accessing workshops difficult.
- 6.2 Key stakeholders from under-represented groups such as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) third-sector organisations have been interviewed as part of Phase I of the process.
- 6.3 Research and engagement activity was planned to ensure representativeness of opinion and view from across the geographical area of SDNP.

## **7. Sustainability**

- 7.1 The development of a shared identity has positive sustainability implications for SDNP which cut across the interconnectedness of the 5 principles set out in the Sustainability Strategy: living with environmental limits; ensuring a strong healthy and just society; achieving a sustainable economy; promoting good governance; using sound science responsibly.
- The shared identity is based on extensive engagement and participation producing a robust evidence base.
  - The shared identity development process has addressed inclusivity and representativeness issues (see section 6 above).
  - In 2012 the International Union for the Conservation for Nature (IUCN) produced a report advocating branding strategy to increase stewardship amongst protected area constituencies. A shared identity, it said, can ‘engage emotions, evoke personal beliefs and prompt the behaviours managers prefer when the brand’s core values are appropriately expressed’ (IUCN, *Parks Vol 18.2*, 2012).
  - Although tourism is one component of the rural economy, this shared identity project is not simply about badging a tourism destination (though visitors are one key audience). A shared identity will help us raise awareness and understanding of the special qualities of the National Park amongst residents as well – influencing attitudes and behaviour.
  - A shared identity will, over time, increase the desirability of the National Park as a place to visit, work, live and protect. This will have positive impacts on sustainable development for example:
    - inspiring visitors, improving their experience and increasing the value of tourism;
    - enabling land managers and local businesses to enhance their story-telling and communications about the National Park;
    - increasing local community pride by emphasising the special qualities of the National Park;
    - linking and bringing a consistency to diverse partner communications – so that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts;
    - increasing understanding and stewardship amongst National Park users;
    - increasing the ability of tourist attractions, farmers, estate managers and local businesses of all kinds to attract new investment.

## **8. External Consultees**

- 8.1 None.

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Appendices None

SDNPA Consultees Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer, Legal Services, Director of Planning, Chief Executive Officer, Director of Planning, Director of Strategy and Partnerships, Director of Corporate Services; Director of Operations

Background Documents None