

Report to	<b>Resources and Performance Committee</b>
Date	<b>5 September 2012</b>
By	<b>Director of Corporate Services</b>
Title of Report	<b>Update on the development of an Estates Strategy for the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA)</b>
Purpose of Report	<b>To provide the Committee with an update on the work in progress to develop an estates strategy for the SDNPA and to seek the Committee's views on the recommendations made within the report</b>

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

- 1. to approve further investigation work to establish a resolution to the issues at the Central West Area Office including an option to investigate the possibility of sourcing a single site to support both the Central West and Central East Area Offices and workshops**
  - 2. approve that SDNPA work with Hampshire County Council and the Forestry Commission on the future plans for QECP to ensure suitable provision is available for the SDNPA Western Area office. It is also recommended to approve that alongside this work, as part of risk mitigation, the SDNPA investigate other suitable premises in alternative parts of the Western Area that could support a Western Office and workshop.**
  - 3. approve that the SDNPA work with Brighton & Hove City Council to assist in the production of a development plan for Stanmer Park that will allow the SDNPA to establish its strategy for staying on site.**
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**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) has been in operation since the 1 April 2011. During the set up phase of the SDNPA and moving into its first year in operation, the SDNPA has been working from a number of locations. The main centre for the SDNPA is in Midhurst, where it works from a variety of leased offices. In addition to these the SDNPA has other leased office accommodation around the National Park for our planning and operations staff.
- 1.2 This paper aims to give the Committee an overview of the estates provision currently in place and for each site, give a summary of the condition and status of the arrangements.
- 1.3 The paper is the first step towards the development of an estates strategy for the Authority that will seek to activity plan and manage the SDNPA's estates provision for the future.
- 1.4 There are links with the South Downs Centre project which is currently underway. This paper does not cover that in detail as the full detail of that project is being covered separately. However, a future estate strategy will include the South Downs Centre as a key part of it.

**2. Current SDNPA Estate**

- 2.1 The current SDNPA estate consists of the following:

Location	Office	Use	Type of ownership	Term of lease
Midhurst	Hatton House	HQ – SMT & Strategy & Partnerships staff	Leased	To 30/06/2013
	Peachey House	Meeting rooms & Member Services	Leased	To 30/06/2013
	Rosemary's Parlour	Planning staff	Leased	To 06/09/2013
	M2	Corporate Services staff	Leased	Tenancy at will
	Depot	Area office/workshop	Leased	To 31/03/2014
Petersfield	Penns Place	Planning staff	Leased	To 31/04/2013
	Queen Elizabeth Country Park	Area office/workshop	Leased	To 31/12/2013
Singleton	Weald & Downland museum	Area office/workshop	Leased	to 31/03/2015
Brighton	Stanmer Park	Area office/workshop	Leased	Tenancy at will
	Seven Sisters	Tool Barn	Leased	To 06/07/2015

2.2 From October 2012 the South Downs Centre and the Memorial Hall in Midhurst will come under the ownership of the SDNPA. This will be the only facility that is owned by the SDNPA rather than leased.

2.3 **Annex I** gives an overview of the status and condition of each of the area office locations shown in 2.1. The focus for the estates strategy has so far been on the area office provision. This is due to the fact that in a year's time the Midhurst and Petersfield offices currently accommodating non-Operations staff will be surrendered as these staff move to the South Downs Centre.

2.4 The focus of work in the Midhurst and Petersfield offices currently accommodating non-Operations staff is maintenance only as these will not be long-term facilities for the SDNPA.

### 3. Resources

3.1 Provision of suitable office accommodation is a key priority for the SDNPA.

3.2 The resources that are required to support this include people and financial.

3.3 The Estates and Administration team are responsible for the maintenance and servicing of office accommodation and alongside the South Downs Centre Project Manager are working on securing fit for purposes leases and long term office accommodation for the Authority.

3.4 There is an annual maintenance budget that is managed by the Estates and Administration Manager. In addition there is capital funding in place for the South Downs Centre and improvements to the Western Area office.

3.5 The total cost of leases is £94,260.

### 4. Risk management

4.1 Business continuity planning forms the main part of risk management in the estates and ICT arena and these will be formalised as part of the ongoing work to bring our estates provision into order.

### 5. Human Rights, Equalities, Health and Safety

5.1 The provision of suitable, fit for purpose office accommodation is a key requirement for the SDNPA. Office accommodation needs to be suitable not only in terms of organisational need

and location but also health and safety (including provision of suitable sanitary facilities, lighting, heating/cooling), access etc.

## **6. External Consultees**

6.1 None.

### **HÉLÈNE ROSSITER**

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Appendices I – Estates Strategy Update September 2012

SDNPA Consultees Chief Executive Officer, Director of Corporate Services, Director of Planning, Director of Strategy and Partnerships, Head of Operations, Chief Finance Officer, Deputy Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer & Senior Solicitor.