

Report to	<b>Policy &amp; Programme Committee</b>
Date	<b>2 June 2015</b>
By	<b>Performance and Projects Manager</b>
Title of Report	<b>Annual review of Major Projects Fund, the Sustainable Communities Fund and the Star Chamber</b>
Purpose of Report	<b>To provide an annual report on 2014-15 grant funding by the South Downs National Park Authority</b>

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**Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to note the report**

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**1. Introduction**

1.1 This report provides a review of the projects supported via the Major Projects Fund (MPF), the Sustainable Communities Fund (SCF) and the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) Star Chamber via the Purpose and Duty Fund from April 2014 to March 2015.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 The MPF was a fund established to support substantive partnership projects. Projects under this fund are approved by the Policy and Programme (P&P) Committee. Projects where the SDNPA contributions exceed £100,000 are approved by the full National Park Authority (NPA). In January 2015 this Committee agreed to amalgamate the major projects fund and the purpose and duty fund into a new strategic fund.
- 2.2 The SCF is a rolling fund established to provide grants to community and voluntary groups, social enterprise organisations and businesses for 'not for profit' projects. To ensure proper scrutiny and well informed decision making an advisory panel chaired by an SDNPA Member, advises on bids for funding between £5,000 - £20,000; although the power to make the decision remains with the Director of Corporate Services.
- 2.3 The Star Chamber, which was established to provide adequate scrutiny for smaller projects, reviews and approves projects under £50,000 exercising delegated powers of the relevant Director/Chief Executive.

**3. Major projects**

3.1 There were no major projects approved during the year. There are 13 major projects underway. The table at **Appendix 1** shows the current position for each of them. The SDNPA has £354,800 committed from current and future budgets to 8 projects at this time. Details of the major projects currently underway or closed during the year are at **Appendix 1**. For every £1 invested by the SDNPA major projects attracted matched funding of £12.

**4. Sustainable Communities Fund**

- 4.1 The uncommitted SCF budget in 2014-15 was £265,000 comprising £125,000 allocated from the budget and a carry forward of £140,000.
- 4.2 The SDNPA, through the SCF, has committed £235,275 on 39 new sustainable community projects across the National Park. A list of these projects for 2014-15, their match funding and geographical spread can be found in **Appendix 2**.

## 5. Summary of projects approved by Star Chamber

5.1 During 2014-15 nine Star Chamber meetings were held. Seven projects were assessed and six were approved for expenditure.

Project	Date approved	SDNPA Funding £	Total Funding £
Historic Landscapes Hampshire	May 2014	20,000	20,000
Brighton Chalk Project Initiation Document approved to go to P&P (see <b>Item 12</b> on the agenda for this meeting)	Jul 2014	100,000 over 5 years	790,500
Rother Payments for Ecosystems Services	Jul 2014	20,000	43,000
Arun and Rother Trust	Jul 2014	3,000	114,900
Alphabet Book	Nov 2014	14,000	76,500
Barbastelle Bat Project (for 2015-16)	Jan 2015	10,000	32,900
Retrofitting at West Dean	Not approved		

5.2 A further 11 projects were considered at an early stage and 9 of them were approved for further project scoping work to be carried out. These projects are:

- Rother payments for ecosystems services (this later went on to be approved as reflected in the table above)
- South Downs Barbastelle Bats services (this later went on to be approved as reflected in the table above)
- Transforming Country Parks – Queen Elizabeth Country Park
- Celebrating historic buildings
- Weald and Downland interpretation
- Alphabet Book (this later went on to be approved as reflected in the table above)
- Lewes Information Points - agreed this project should seek funding from section 106 (of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended)
- Town Centre retail study – for Local Plan
- Habitat Connectivity Mapping – for Local Plan

## 6. Resources

6.1 The total opening budget for the MPF for 2014-15 was £628,008 made up of £125,000, along with previously committed budgets of £503,008. The January meeting of this Committee agreed to amalgamate the old major projects fund and the old purpose and duty fund into a new strategic fund. The amount available to support projects in 2015-16 is £280,000 (including one-off contribution of £60,000 in 15-16) to cover a deficit previously identified. After taking account of that deficit and the commitments already made to projects; there is £60,000 available for projects in 2015-16.

6.2 Members should note that funding is being sought for the Brighton CHAMP project (elsewhere on this agenda) which requires £20,000 from the strategic fund in 2015-16. Members should also be aware that Star Chamber approved £7,800 for Celebrating Historic Buildings a joint event and guidance produced with the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (on 27 April 2015) therefore the total remaining in the strategic fund for this year is £38,200.

6.3 The unspent and unapproved residual 2014/15 purpose and duty budget will also be transferred to the new strategic fund in due course as part of closedown.

## **7. Risk Management**

7.1 Project risks are managed through the specific risk register for each project. The main risk for the funding of projects more generally is unforeseen changes to the level of funding provided by relevant Government departments for future years. Part of the mitigation for this risk is a robust monitoring and project approval system and regular reporting to this Committee on projects and the budget available.

7.2 There may be some risks to our reputation if we are unable to provide cash match funding for some of our larger projects. This would also potentially reduce the types of funding we were able to apply for. The mitigation for this, is the work that is being carried out (note the presentation updating Members on this area of work elsewhere on this agenda) to generate income for the South Downs National Park and also potentially for the SDNPA.

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

8.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

## **9. Sustainability**

9.1 Projects are only grant funded if they contribute to Partnership Management Plan priorities.

## **10. External Consultees**

10.1 None.

### **ANNE REHILL**

#### **Performance and Projects**

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Appendices

1. Current Position on Existing Major Projects
2. Sustainable Communities Fund Projects Approved 2014-15

SDNPA Consultees

Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer, Legal Services. Director of Corporate Services, Director of Planning, Director of Strategy and Partnerships, Director of Operations, Chief Executive, Heads of Team, Legal Services.

Background Documents

[NPA 2014 June 26 Agenda Item 14](#)  
[P&P paper January 2015](#)

## Major Projects Performance Monitoring Q4 2014-15



Title	Period	RAG	Progress Status	Cost Status	SDNPA spend to date	SDNPA £	Actual Start Date	Actual End Date	Comment
Cycling Ambition-Overview	Q4 14/15	⬇️	Behind	On Budget	0	100000	01 Oct 2013		Forecast completion of Cycle Ambition DfT Grant by September 2015. However, status is Amber as two schemes have not yet started on site due to delays with landowner agreements and other unforeseen constraints. Three routes have been completed and the remainder are under construction with the exception of three schemes which were removed from the programme as they were undeliverable within required timescales. The programme successfully secured an additional £450k for a new scheme at Drove Road, Brighton, which will connect with the Falmer to Woodingdean link. The SDNPA Major Project funding will be spent in 15/16 as our priority has been to spend the DfT allocation first.
Alice Holt-Overview	Q4 14/15	⬇️	Behind	On Budget	70000	80000	24 Jul 2012		The outstanding element is support for the volunteering, mtgs have occurred between the SDVRS, SDNPA and the Alice Holt Community group to develop this work so the 10k will be used to support this development. Internal project evaluation workshop to be held 30/04/15.
Overall NIA project progress and expenditure	Q4 14/15	⬆️	<b>Project Complete</b>		68562	160000	01 Apr 2012	31 Mar 2015	The project is complete, with all key outcomes achieved, on time and on budget. On 11th March an evaluation workshop, facilitated by external contractors, was attended by over 20 partners. A draft report has been received and is being reviewed.
Woodland and forestry- general project overview	Q4 14/15	⬆️	On Track	On Budget	<b>Budget/spend TBC pending SMT approval</b>		29 Oct 2012		<p>This a landscape scale forestry partnership between the SDNPA, Forestry Commission, Woodland Trust and Wildlife Trust; it aims to increase active management of woodland for economic, environmental and social benefits. The project is 82% through its three year term; all project objectives have been exceeded. Key areas of success are:</p> <p>Grant Investment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased the area of woodland in management from 36% to 70%.</li> <li>Increased the number of EWGS grants schemes by 85% this is worth an additional £1.7m additional grant investment.</li> <li>In terms of regional activity for the entire South East the SDNP has 11% of the regions woodland but has increased EWGS spend over 3 years from 8% to 20%. (so £1 in £5 of woodland grant investment for the South East is now spent in the South Downs National Park)</li> </ul> <p>Economic Return on Grant Investment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The estimated value of timber released into the local economy due to the increase in woodland management and grant investment is £10.2m over five years (or £2.04m of timber annually from £350,000 grant investment).</li> <li>The above £10.2m only estimates the value of the sustainable timber harvest, there is an unquantified return to first line timber contractors and second and third line local processors of timber products from sawmills to wood fuel and commercial end users such as construction or joinery.</li> </ul> <p>Habitat restoration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>462ha of PAWS (Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites) now under active management and restoration back to productive mainly broadleaf woodland.</li> <li>170ha of ASNW (Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland) with invasive non-native species under restoration.</li> </ul> <p>Education, information and business development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>355 people have attended business development events.</li> <li>3000 people attended a project sponsored Wood Fair. Plus the project had been represented at a further 17 public engagement events.</li> <li>Established a network of over 130 local forestry based businesses, secondary processors and end users.</li> <li>Worked with LEADER and LEPs (Local Enterprise Partnerships) across the National Park to ensure forestry enterprise is fairly represented in future support mechanisms. The LEPS within the SDNPA are the only enterprise partnerships in the country to include forestry support in their policies.</li> </ul>

Title	Period	RAG	Progress Status	Cost Status	SDNPA spend to date	SDNPA £	Actual Start Date	Actual End Date	Comment
Arc field trip-Overview	Mar 15	⊖	Projects Complete		20000	20000	08 May 2014	31 Mar 2015	ARC is a project we've been involved with as a partner organisation for some time, the piece of work we're funding (ARC Explorer) is the development of a biodiversity reporting mobile application and website, led by RSPB. The long-term intended outcome for this project is that we'll have a very engaging and interactive application that we can adapt to suit our organisational needs once the ARC project runs its course. The app is now available on Android devices and will be available on Apple mobiles and tablets as soon as it is approved by the Apple Store. The ARC project team (led by RSPB) have launched marketing communications. Initial feedback very encouraging.
Weald and downland Gateway project STAGE 1-Overview	Q4 14/15	⊖		8000	8000	01 Mar 2013	30 Sep 2014	Museum seeks improved visitor facilities, more use of sustainable transport to museum and new introductory gallery, including interpretation of the National Park, and improvements to generate more income to sustain ongoing maintenance of historic buildings and other collections. The HLF Stage 2 application was successful in autumn 2014. Museum is in the process of seeking further grant from SDNPA, towards the implementation of the interpretation strategy, which includes the shared identity. This application is separate from the current planning application.	
Heathland reunited project overview HLF stage 1	Q4 14/15	⊖	On Track	On Budget	7000	7000	01 Apr 2014		Nine items of project work undertaken by consultants. Heathlands & Biomass workshop held in March. Project presentations given at National Heathland Conference & SD Network. Activity Plan and Management & Maintenance Plan in preparation. Good input from partners and SDNPA colleagues. Stage 2 application due for submission by 08 June '15. Total project spend to date £53,300
West Sussex Rural Partnership-Overview	Q4 14/15	⊖	On Track	On Budget	25000	50000	01 Apr 2014		Partnership's recent focus has been on improving rural broadband coverage and developing joint initiatives with Coast to Capital LEP – see Rural Broadband Pilot project below as one example.
Local Sustainable Transport Fund-Overview	Q4 14/15	⊖	On Track	On Budget	61576	150000	01 Oct 2012		Total £3.81m DfT spend across South Downs and New Forest NPs. Shown here is SDNPA Major Project spend in 14/15, the remainder of MP budget will be spent in 15/16 alongside the new LSTF programme spend. This funding is already committed to projects.
Fieldfare LEADER project transition-Overview	Q4 14/15	⊖	Projects Complete		10000	10000	01 Jan 2014	31 Dec 2014	Transition year completed, on time and on budget. Local Development Strategy bid successful. RDPE funding secured for new programme 2015-2020. David Doxford will represent SDNPA on Fieldfare LEADER Programme Delivery Group.
LEADER transition Sussex Downs and Low Weald 2014-Overview	Q4 14/15	⊖		10000	10000	01 Jan 2014	31 Dec 2014	Transition year completed, on time and on budget. Local Development Strategy bid successful. RDPE funding secured for new LEADER programmes 2015-2020 for the two LEADER areas of Central Sussex and Sussex Downs and Coastal Plain. David Doxford will represent SDNPA on the two Sussex LEADER Local Action Groups.	
Community land trust AiRs-Overview	Q4 14/15	⊕	Behind	On Budget	34000	49000	01 Oct 2013		Useful work undertaken to identify pipeline of CLT schemes. However the potential to complete six CLT schemes in SDNP to planning application stage has not been realised, with only one having a planning application submitted so far (Lewes). A particular focus is being given to developing CLT housing schemes at Slindon and Steyning, as well as Lewes, over the remaining six months for which SDNPA is contributing funding to this project.
Secrets of the High Woods Overview	Q4 14/15	⊖	On Track	On Budget	39275	130000	01 Oct 2013		Volunteer ground truthing almost finished its first season - 89 volunteers trained and taking part. First reports by volunteer/staff teams on areas of rapid field survey are completed. National Mapping Programme work making good progress, new IT system allows this to be seen in real time and is great step forwards. HLF granted permission to use underspend to appoint archives consultant to support project. New HLF case officer visited project, went to see volunteers and very happy with progress. recruitment for new project Manger is just being completed. Project working well, on time and on budget.



**Grant Award (£)**

- Up to 1000
- 1000 - 2000
- 2000 - 5000
- 5000 - 10000
- 10000 - 20000

South Downs National Park

Project Title	Grant Sought	Total Cost
1 Privett Centre Bunk Beds	£1,268.42	£2,114.03
2 Lewes Hike and Bike Festival	£5,000.00	£10,342.00
3 Living Classrooms	£1,401.50	£2,401.50
4 Cycle Lewes Leaflet	£274.00	£874.00
5 Steyning Festival Equipment	£740.00	£1,234.00
6 South Pond Project	£20,000.00	£63,000.00
7 Secure Storage	£1,000.00	£2,000.00
8 Lychpole Dew pond	£11,901.77	£19,928.25
9 Benches and Wall	£1,248.00	£2,899.00
10 Bespoke Biking Community Hub	£15,000.00	£45,000.00
11 Steyning Food and Drink Festival	£1,481.96	£3,585.00
12 Increasing sustainable transport solutions to Charleston	£4,270.36	£5,128.00
13 Replacement footbridge	£2,000.00	£12,700.00
14 Cycle Stands	£1,500.00	£5,064.00
15 Family Wild Club	£4,959.00	£8,256.00
16 Meon Valley Trail	£5,000.00	£13,200.00
17 All Ride now LLP	£4,050.10	£8,100.20
18 Walks around West Meon	£440.25	£837.00
19 Big Park	£5,000.00	£8,365.00
20 Learning and Growing Space	£20,000.00	£145,000.00

Project Title	Grant Sought	Total Cost
21 Home Fires	£5,000.00	£118,500.00
22 Stories seen through a glass plate	£3,500.00	£14,750.00
23 Slindon - Learning and Community Space	£20,000.00	£150,000.00
24 Southerham Barn	£20,000.00	£160,000.00
25 The Petersfield Book	£5,000.00	£17,500.00
26 Black Down Barrows	£2,800.00	£5,000.00
27 West Dean Walks Leaflet	£2,362.10	£3,850.60
28 The Observatory	£10,000.00	£128,500.00
29 Patina Lewes	£5,000.00	£36,770.00
30 Lewes Pound Development	£2,250.00	£7,750.00
31 Uppark	£3,000.00	£7,000.00
32 Sussex Weald and Downs Walking Festival (Eastern Area)	£1,000.00	£17,000.00
33 Meon Valley Aerial Film (Western Area)	£3,992.50	£8,057.50
34 Exploring access land (Across Park)	£2,946.00	£4,516.00
35 South Downs Series Publication (Across Park)	£6,889.00	£15,982.00
36 Living off the Land (Across Park)	£20,000.00	£87,200.00
37 Town to Earth (Across Park)	£5,000.00	£89,770.00
38 Engaging autistic children with the Hampshire Countryside (Western Area)	£5,000.00	£26,833.52
39 Outreach Project (Western and Central)	£5,000.00	£21,822.00

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Sustainable Communities  
 Fund Projects Approved  
 2014/15