

### **Agenda Item 3**

**Unconfirmed minutes – to be confirmed at the next meeting of the Committee**

#### **SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

#### **POLICY & PROGRAMME COMMITTEE MEETING 3 MARCH 2015**

Held at the Memorial Hall, South Downs Centre, Midhurst at 10:32am.

Present:

Ken Bodfish	Jo Carr	Vaughan Clarke
Barry Lipscomb (Deputy Chair)	Sue Saville	Deborah Urquhart
Paul Yallop	Margaret Paren (ex officio)	Norman Dingemans (ex officio)

SDNPA Officers: Trevor Beattie (Chief Executive), Andrew Lee (Director of Strategy and Partnerships), Phil Belden (Director of Operations), Louise Read (Monitoring Officer), Michelle Herrington (Interim Deputy Chief Finance Officer), Vicky Lawrence (Living Landscapes Manager), Bruce Middleton (Wealden Heath Area Manager), Andy Beattie (People & Places Manager), Jeremy Burgess (Eastern Downs Area Manager), Angie Blowman (Sustainable Futures Manager), Rob Ainslie (Development Manager), Jonathan Mycock (Heathland Project Manager), Chris Fairbrother (Landscape Strategy Lead), Stella New (Member Services Support Officer).

#### **ITEM 1: APOLOGIES**

167. Apologies were received from Deborah Urquhart, Pete West and Jeremy Leggett.

#### **ITEM 2: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

168. There were none.

#### **ITEM 3: MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 29 JANUARY 2015**

169. The minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **ITEM 4: MATTERS ARISING**

170. Regarding the new Intranet and Website (minute 124):

- The Communications & Engagement Manager informed the Committee that the new website would go live on 5 March, but it could take up to 48hrs for the links to consolidate so that overseas users could view it.

171. Regarding the Gatwick Airport Consultation (minute 129):

- The Director of Strategy & Partnerships informed the Committee that a holding statement to the Airports Commission, based closely on the structure of the A27 consultation response, was submitted following consultation with the Deputy Chair of the Committee, and a link to this and any future consultation responses would be circulated to Members.

172. Regarding the Updated Corporate Plan for Year 2 of the 2014-17 3 Year Plan (minute 133):

- The Chair commented on the affordable housing objective in the context of the 1 March Sunday Times article referring to settlements in the NP with an average house price of over £700K.

173. Regarding the 2015-16 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (minute 143):

- The Director of Strategy & Partnerships confirmed that in view of the Defra cut of 1.74%, no changes were needed to the draft budget approved by the Committee in January for recommendation to the NPA meeting on 26 March.

174. Regarding the 2015-16 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (minute 142):

- The Director of Strategy & Partnerships confirmed that any proposals for income generation, to include analyses on potential return on investments and risk would be brought to future meetings of the Committee.

175. Regarding Project Funding and Prioritisation Proposals (minute 154):

- The Director of Strategy & Partnerships confirmed that following the Committee's decision to retain the Sustainable Communities Fund (SCF) and not merge it with the Grassroots fund, a mid year report on funding pots and how these are being operated would be brought to the October meeting of the Committee.

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- The Committee commented on the need for a discussion regarding the nature of the SCF panel and its relationship to the Committee.
176. Regarding the Volunteering Update and Future Development (minute 165):
- The Director of Strategy & Partnerships informed the Committee that Members would be kept updated regarding arrangements for the Volunteering Fair.
177. The Committee commented that processes should be considered to ensure all Committee decisions are delivered.

#### **ITEM 5: UPDATES ON PREVIOUS COMMITTEE DECISIONS**

178. The Authority Chair updated the Committee on recent meetings with the Leaders of Local Authorities which included discussions on Shared Identity and Rights of Way (RoW):
- A meeting with the Chief Executive and West Sussex County Council (WSSCC), who expressed an interest in:
    - Using the Shared Identity in their libraries and mobile libraries and displaying the SDNPA's walk and ride leaflets as part of their Health & Wellbeing programme.
    - Joint approaches to cycling proposals and bids for LEP funding.
    - A joint Local Authority infrastructure group involving the SDNPA Chief Executive and WSSCC to consider the consequences of the proposed expansion of Gatwick Airport and associated tranquillity issues, following the Council's move to oppose the proposal due to constituents' concerns regarding noise levels.
  - A meeting with the Leaders of Lewes District Council, Wealden District Council, and Eastbourne Borough Council, and the SDNPA appointed Members from these councils, where support was shown for:
    - Using the Shared Identity in their libraries, into which Tourist Information Centres were being incorporated.
    - The concept of the South Downs Way as a central 'spine', with core RoW 'ribs' leading to and from it, linking with local attractions and facilities.
    - The Egret's Way as a key strategic RoW.
    - RoW that encouraged visitors to and from less wealthy areas, from a health and wellbeing perspective, as well as tourism.
  - A subsequent meeting between the above and East Sussex County Council (ESCC), and the SDNPA appointed Members from these councils, where the Leader of ESCC acknowledged:
    - The approach being taken by the other Councils with regard to the Shared Identity.
    - Consideration of the proposal that ESCC adopt the Egret's Way could not be given until the route was complete.
    - Consideration would be given to the ESCC RoW maintenance programme to include the proactive involvement of the South Downs Volunteer Ranger Services during the summer months.
    - The ESCC RoW maintenance budget had been broadly maintained and that they would ensure the key routes into the SDNP were prioritised.
179. The Committee commented on the growing road-side litter problem, due to an interruption in highway litter collection. This had followed a number of fatal accidents, requiring a new safety protocol. This matter could be taken to the Campaign for National Parks by the appointed Member.
180. In response to questions, officers clarified there had been exceptional vegetation growth on RoW during the summer of 2014, and that ESCC had responded effectively with its reactive maintenance operation.

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#### **ITEM 7: URGENT MATTERS**

181. There were none.

#### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

182. There was none.

#### **ITEM 8: FORWARD BUSINESS FOR 2015**

183. The Committee received a verbal update from the Director of Strategy & Partnerships. He explained to the Committee:

- The forward business was subject to continual change and it was important for Members to have a regular overview.
- The majority of business for the P&P Committee would be likely to fall into three categories: corporate/governance, project approvals/mid term reviews, and policy issues.
- The NIA (Nature Improvement Area) project report would be brought to the Governance Committee, as the project was now at an end.

184. The Committee commented:

- The need for clarification of any implications and/or changes in policy following elections regarding the relationship between SI 06 and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- A report on the next steps in implementing the Communications & Engagement Strategy would come to the Committee later this year.
- Projects were required to operate within the constraints of the budget, and completed projects where ambitions had exceeded the budget were relevant to the Committee.

185. In response to questions, officers clarified:

- Members could ask for items to be considered for the agenda via the Committee Chair, Director of Strategy and Partnerships or Member Services.

#### **ITEM 9: CORPORATE PLAN 2014-15 FOR RECOMMENDATION FOR APPROVAL TO NPA**

186. The Committee considered the report by the Performance & Project Manager (PP7/15).

187. The Director of Strategy & Partnerships introduced Vicky Lawrence, the new Living Landscapes Manager, to the Committee.

- The Performance & Project Manager highlighted to the Committee that on pages 19, 21 and 23 the year error would be corrected before submission to the NPA.
- The Living Landscapes Manager, Wealden Heath Area Manager, People & Places Manager, Eastern Downs Area Manager, Sustainable Futures Manager and Development Manager presented to the Committee examples of the partnership work being done by the SDNPA to achieve the priorities outlined by the Delivery Framework of the Partnership Management Plan (PMP).
- The Sustainable Futures Manager informed the Committee that an update on Broadband would be given at the Member Workshop on 25 June.

188. The Committee commented:

- Their thanks for a series of helpful and interesting presentations.
- Their concerns regarding broadband:
  - The very low broadband speed in rural sites that remained far from a broadband cabinet.
  - How the Government-led high speed broadband project fitted with the National Park Purposes.
  - Whether the cost of SDNPA officers involved in broadband work could be covered by LEP or other funding.

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- Their support for the SDNPA's involvement with broadband:
  - Promoting broadband supported local communities, in line with the National Park's Purposes and Duty.
  - Broadband was not outside the SDNPA's remit as low speed and coverage was an issue for all National Parks, and National Parks England (NPE) were currently lobbying Government in this respect.
  - The condition of the installation of superfast broadband could be required for permission for developments of more than five houses.
- Officers were commended on their work on the North Street Quarter, which was a good example of how the SDNP is having strategic influence over a very significant scheme in Lewes.
- The importance of understanding internal staff costs to ascertain the efficiency and effectiveness of projects.
- Accounting for staff time could be a time-costly exercise, and officers would report to the Committee if any further investment was required for a project.
- The importance of setting project ambitions to a high level within available resources.
- Members noted the position on apprentices and were of the view that a positive approach was needed.
- The importance of working with the West Sussex Environment and Climate Change Strategic Board, which is also developing a Food Portal.
- The need to consider responsible dog ownership alongside improved access.
- The Defra funded Cool Rivers project being undertaken by the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.

189. In response to questions, officers clarified:

- Internet providers were responsible for promoting the services based on the new high-speed broadband cabinets.
- Coverage in the National Park would fall significantly below the estimated 95% average figure for the national Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) roll-out, and some areas were currently receiving speeds of less than 2MB.
- In the PMP the SDNPA had committed to assisting local communities and businesses by influencing the providers of broadband to address the shortfall.
- Broadband had been a priority for Members in previous years' Corporate Plans.
- No SDNPA cash had been put into broadband services work, only onto into generating an evidence base on the gaps to be used in advocacy.
- The challenge of trying to influence delivery of a large contract that had been awarded to a single supplier
- The SDNPA could advise interested communities regarding the installation of self funded superfast broadband, referring to the examples cited on the Hampshire County Council (HCC) website.
- Further monitoring was required before occupancy levels of the new barn owl boxes could be reported on. This was a licensed activity requiring up-skilling of volunteers.
- Work was being done with the Communications & Engagement and Planning teams to develop planning case studies and other media, illustrating how Development Management and Planning Policy were delivering PMP objectives.
- Baseline figures would be included in future versions of the Corporate Plan now the appropriate data is available.
- There was currently no budget to recruit the proposed additional four apprentice posts; however these would be filled during the next year if external funding could be secured.
- The difficulty in bidding to the LEPs funding for small projects, for example on apprenticeships, when their focus has to be very high-level.

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- The importance of ensuring sufficient management and mentoring time in order to develop apprentices' skills and expertise.
190. As an action to take forward:
- The Committee recommend that consideration be given to the inclusion of conditions relating to broadband to Development Management applications for five or more residential properties recommended for permission, where infrastructure exists.
191. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee approved the revised Corporate Plan for recommendation to the National Park Authority.

#### ITEM 10: HEATHLANDS REUNITED PROPOSALS FOR STAGE 2 BID

192. The Committee received a verbal update and presentation from the Heathlands Officer.
193. The Director of Strategy & Partnerships informed the Committee:
- The project and Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid had been previously agreed in principle by Members, but formal agreement was required to be delegated from the Authority to officers for the Stage II bid to be submitted in June.
  - A final report on the content of the Stage II Bid, for information only, would be brought back to the Committee at the meeting on 2 June.
194. The Committee commented:
- The breakdown of funding contribution had been requested by the Chair for the benefit of the Committee.
  - The need to include volunteer time in both the SDNPA and partners' contributions breakdown as this counted towards match funding and represented a real project cost.
  - The importance of securing the ongoing legacy of projects as discussed during project evaluations by the Governance Committee.
  - The importance for the Stage II bid to develop an economic model and explore the viable economic uses of heathland in order to avoid on-going, long-term public funding.
  - The funding of '£150K' in the report recommendation should be amended to 'up to £150K' as previously agreed by Members.
195. In response to questions, officers clarified:
- The overall framework of the project had been agreed by the HLF at Stage I, but there was scope to develop the approach of the Stage II bid further prior to submission.
  - The Heathlands Reunited partnership agreement included a commitment by the various landowning bodies involved to maintain restored heathland for 20 years after completion of the project.
  - WSCC had very small areas of heathland that were managed by the Sussex Wildlife Trust.
  - The SDNPA's volunteer contribution amounted to £25K, and would be included in the contributions breakdown.
  - The SDNPA's contribution to the five year project had been estimated at £150K and could be less.
  - Funding of up to £150K had been included in the forecasts for the major projects fund in the proposed budget model being submitted for approval to the NPA on 26 March.
196. It was proposed and seconded to amend the officer's recommendation to include the wording 'up to £150K'. Following a vote, the proposal was carried.
197. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee:
- 1) Recommended to the NPA that it confirms, subject to the Stage II HLF bid being successful, the allocation of match funding of up to £150,000 for the Heathlands Reunited project from the Major Projects Fund or its successor, for the purposes of delivering the project; and;

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- 2) Recommended, subject to confirmation of the match funding by the Authority, for the NPA to delegate authority to the Director of Strategy & Partnerships, in consultation with the Committee Chair, to agree & submit the Stage II HLF bid.

#### **ITEM 11: SHARED IDENTITY – REPORT ON PHASE I ROLL OUT AND NEXT STEPS**

198. The Committee considered the report by the Communications & Engagement Manager (PP8/15).
199. The Committee commented:
  - Their congratulations to the Communications & Engagement team on progress with the roll out and a world-class brand and identity achieved during a challenging time of staff turnover.
  - Although subject to the budget and timescale of partners, the serendipitous approach to signage and branding which was raising the profile of the National Park from the inside out, in contrast to the boundary marker approach that had been taken by other National Parks.
  - The importance of encouraging the scarp slope spring-line communities in East Sussex to adopt the shared identity, and the support that could be offered by area teams.
  - Members and existing partners could assist with promoting the take-up of the shared identity.
  - The need to look at how businesses could adopt the identity alongside their logo, thereby not deterring other, similar businesses in the same area.
  - Staff and volunteers could be encouraged to promote use of the shared identity.
  - The need for the Committee to discuss allocation of resources and priorities for the continuing roll-out, and ongoing interpretation work, as part of the budget and corporate plan for subsequent years.
  - The Committee needed to be kept informed of any issues and next steps.
  - Their thanks to the three members who had given support and advice as part of the external Steering Group, and the need to decide the extent to which Member support could be needed in future over and above the role of the Committee.
  - Members could assist the Communications & Engagement Manager in looking at strategic priorities prior to the next budget round.
200. In response to questions, officers clarified that:
  - Priority focus had been given to public transport gateways during the roll-out, and discussions about the areas around Winchester and Lewes railway stations would continue to be prioritised.
  - The shared identity tool-kit had been developed for professional use by designers, and a shared identity brief and fact sheet had been circulated to Members and officers.
  - The cost of developing a community tool-kit had not been included in the budget, and design advice and assistance could entail intensive work and officer time.
  - All Members were encouraged to engage with and put forward new partners for the shared identity.
  - The need to consider the onward strategy for the shared identity, as more community guidance would require more resource.
201. As an action to take forward:
  - Further consideration could be given to the development of a Shared Identity template for use by partners.

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202. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee:

- 1) Noted progress with Phase I of the implementation of the Shared Identity with selected partners, and approved the move to the wider Phase II roll out by releasing the toolkit for general use.
- 2) Agreed to continue current work on 'soft' signage opportunities and sustainable business promotion provided through the roll out of the shared identity and our core work.
- 3) Recommended to the National Park Authority that the Communications & Engagement External Partners' Working Group be dissolved.

#### **ITEM 12: BIG CHALK 'EU LIFE+ INTEGRATED PROJECT'**

203. The Committee received a verbal update from the Landscape Strategy Lead on recent meetings with other Protected Landscapes and Defra on the potential for a major EU bid based on delivery of EU Directives across the chalk landscapes.
204. The Landscape Strategy Lead informed the Committee that a more detailed report would be brought to the Committee at the June meeting.
205. The Committee commented:
- Their support for the name 'Big Chalk'.
  - The importance of demonstrating that National Parks were able to lead on very large projects.
  - Other than Interreg European Regional Development Fund bids, the South East had to date not met the criteria for major European funding.
  - The need for projects involving very large and complex bids to include evidence of impact and delivery on the ground.
  - The importance of the Committee's input to projects at an early stage in order to facilitate development, and of considering the investment required in officer time.
206. In response to questions, officers clarified:
- If successful in securing one-year development funding, a full bid would be prepared and then submitted in 2016, with the intention to start work on the project in Spring 2017.
  - The bid would be collaborative and complex, involving Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) partners outside the National Park in the Central and Southern chalk blocks.
  - The standard for meeting the European Commission's criteria was very high, requiring 100% delivery of the framework Directives.
  - Officers had received Defra funded Logical Framework Training as part of the Phase I bid for technical training to assist with bid submission.
  - The project would deliver multiple PMP objectives, and could secure funding that might not otherwise be accessed.
  - The project offered a continuation from the NIA project.
  - Chalk grassland was one of the most precious and threatened habitats in Northern Europe, and the SDNP had some of the most significant areas.

#### **CHAIR**

The meeting closed at 1:17pm.