

Report to	Governance Committee
Date	23 September 2015
By	Performance and Project Manager
Title of Report	Project Evaluation Report
Purpose of Report	To present project evaluations and summaries of case studies for Members to consider

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

- 1) Receive the project evaluations**
 - 2) Agree if it wishes to make recommendations to officers as a result of the learning from the evaluations**
-

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report presents a number of project evaluations for consideration by the Governance Committee. The Committee is asked to consider the evaluation reports and identify any recommendations it may wish to make as a result of the learning points and themes highlighted.
- 1.2 In addition, this report identifies some general learning themes, identified across the year that will be incorporated in to an improvement plan for the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA).

2. Background

- 2.1 As part of the review of performance reporting, the Governance Committee now receives evaluation reports on completed projects. This process allows the opportunity to learn from the projects that have been carried out to date. It allows lessons learnt to be applied across the organisation, helps to improve the way we develop and manage projects in the future, as well as potentially informing policy and the future approach to similar or related areas of work.
- 2.2 There are 2 evaluations attached to this report.

3. Project evaluations and case studies

- 3.1 The aim of the **Forestry Partnership** was to bring more woodlands within the South Downs National Park into active management. The project aimed to pool and co-ordinate the efforts of key organisations acting within the National Park (Forestry Commission, Woodland Trust, Wildlife Trusts and Local Authorities) and work closely with landowners and local enterprises to seize new opportunities and respond to emerging markets such as woodfuel and sustainable development. It is a collective landscape scale approach that will encourage networking for environmental, social and economic gains and enable the effective utilisation of timber to become a feature of the South Downs National Park identity.
- 3.2 SDNPA contributed £71,470 of the total cost for the project which was £151,470. This is

considered to be a good return on investment as over the 3 year project period over £13 million in grant income and income generated through increased Woodland management was raised. The details of the evaluation are at **Appendix 2**.

- 3.3 The **LEADER, Fieldfare and Sussex Downs** is a programme that originated in Europe, and stands for Liaison Entre Actions de Development Rural - integrated action for rural development. The programme can fund farmers, growers, foresters, other local rural businesses and rural community organisations to help create jobs; develop rural businesses and support the rural economy.
- 3.4 SDNPA contributed £20,000. For the 2014-2020 programme, nationally 80 bids were successful. Each was awarded a 'base' £1m plus additional funds relating to the quality of the bid. We had considerable local success, which represents an excellent return on the initial SDNPA investment. Fieldfare LEADER is contracted to deliver a £1.6m programme of grant aid. Central Sussex LAG will allocate £1.7m. Sussex Downs & Coastal Plain LAG have £1.49m. The details of the evaluation are at **Appendix 3**.
- 3.5 Since the last Committee 4 case studies have been produced. A summary of the case studies is at **Appendix 4**. They can be viewed via the intranet, where there is a case studies area in the resources section.

4. Key Learning points

- 4.1 The following key learning points are evident to greater or lesser degrees in all of the evaluations and case studies. Further detailed learning will be incorporated into the improvement plan as appropriate.
- 4.2 Project Governance and simple, proportionate and effective processes for project management is a key theme – clarity around responsibilities, a strong project plan and project management and templates for common requirements such as data sharing and partnership agreements, the last two were particularly important in the Forestry Partnership example. The importance of post project sustainability and ongoing support and commitment for partnerships to continue working together after a project has completed is highlighted.
- 4.3 Partnership working is a key theme - future consideration should be given to providing adequate project and partnership management resources (for energising networks; joining-up opportunities; building collective knowledge; collating live feedback etc.), ensuring they are integrated into the delivery model and that the skill-sets of the management team are appropriate for delivering these functions.
- 4.4 Partnership also requires an entrepreneurial outlook and good intelligence to ensure opportunities can be effectively realised. It could be advantageous in future partnership projects to create a number of thematic clusters where this is appropriate – each would be responsible for peer review, product development and practice adoption in relation to specific elements of a programme.
- 4.5 The enabling role that the SDNPA often has is a key theme and includes; spotting synergies and adding value through bringing partners and communities together. This is also evident in the important leadership role the SDNPA can play in large projects, both the NIA and Forestry Partnership are good examples of this, as is the Bramber Walks for All case study.

5. Resources

- 5.1 There are no direct implications as a result of this report but it is possible that where learning or improvement is recommended, that some resources might be needed to implement those recommendations. Following completion of the projects further ongoing funding may be required to enable the impact to be fully realised. This may give rise to

budget proposals coming forward in future years. Where possible such sustainability issues will be more fully addressed in the development stages of the projects.

6. Risk management

- 6.1 The risks for the individual projects were monitored using a risk register for each one. The risks of not learning are that the SDNPA does not make the best use of its resources or repeats mistakes in future which could have been avoided.

7. Human Rights, Equalities, Health and Safety

- 7.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

8. Sustainability

- 8.1 Learning from projects contributes to sustainability principle 2 ensuring a strong healthy and just society – considering social cohesion and wellbeing; principle 3 achieving a sustainable economy – considering impacts on or contribution to a sustainable economy; and principle 4 Promoting good governance – considering how to encourage active participation.

9. External Consultees

- 9.1 None.

ANNE REHILL

Performance and Project Manager

Contact Officer: Anne Rehill

Tel: 01730 819217

email: anne.rehill@southdowns.gov.uk

Appendices

1. Forestry Partnership evaluation
2. LEADER, Fieldfare and Sussex Downs evaluation
3. List of new case studies

SDNPA Consultees

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

Background Documents

http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/GOV_2015July14-Agenda-Item-9.pdf

http://southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/gov_2015Feb24-Agenda-Item-7.pdf

http://southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/gov_2014Nov18_Agenda-Item-7.pdf

http://southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/gov_2014Sep18_Agenda-Item-16.pdf

http://southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/gov_2014Jun24_Agenda-Item-14.pdf