

## **SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY POLICY & PROGRAMME COMMITTEE MEETING 21 JULY 2015**

Held at the Memorial Hall, South Downs Centre, Midhurst at 10:30am.

Present:

Ken Bodfish (Chair)	Jo Carr	Daniel Humphreys
Barry Lipscomb (Deputy Chair)	Sue Saville	Deborah Urquhart
Pete West	Margaret Paren (ex officio)	Norman Dingemans (ex officio)

SDNPA Officers: Andrew Lee (Director of Strategy & Partnerships), Karen Everett (Deputy Monitoring Officer), Michelle Herrington (Acting Head of Finance), Amanda Elmes (Learning, Outreach & Volunteer Lead), Alan Brough (Business Services Manager), Steve Elliott (ICT Strategy Manager), Angie Blowman (Sustainable Futures Manager), Emily Brennan (Biodiversity Strategy Lead), Jonathan Mycock (Heathland Project Officer), Stella New (Member Services Support Officer).

### **ITEM 1: APOLOGIES**

1. The Director of Strategy & Partnerships chaired the meeting for Items 1 & 2.
2. Apologies were received from Philip Ede.

### **ITEM 2: ELECTION OF CHAIR**

3. The Deputy Monitoring Officer declared that 2 nominations had been received; Ken Bodfish and Barry Lipscomb. In line with the SDNPA Standing Orders each nominee was invited to address the Committee, in alphabetical order by surname for no more than 2 minutes.
4. Ken Bodfish addressed the Committee and in addition to his nomination statement, stated: He envisaged that the Committee would take an increased role in addressing major issues that would confront the Authority in the immediate and long-term future. This might be through establishing mechanisms such as the Strategic Priorities Task & Finish Group to focus discussions and inform Member awaydays. If elected as Chair, he would encourage debate, whilst ensuring discussion was succinct, in order for the Committee to function optimally.
5. Barry Lipscomb addressed the Committee and, in addition to his nomination statement, stated: He concurred with the comments from Ken Bodfish and that he had been a loyal deputy to the Chair and to the Committee. If not elected as Chair, he would wholeheartedly support the Chair in the role of Deputy Chair. He asked the Committee to consider the individual styles of chairing, and wished to give the Committee an opportunity to make a clear choice as the election in 2014 had required the toss of a coin.
6. Without further question or debate and following a vote Ken Bodfish was duly elected as Chair of the Policy & Programme Committee until the Authority AGM in 2016 and presided over the rest of the meeting.

### **ITEM 3: ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIR**

7. The Chair informed the Committee that as Barry Lipscomb was the only nomination. He was duly elected as Deputy Chair of the Policy & Programme Committee until the Authority AGM in 2016.
8. The Chair commented that he foresaw Members of the Committee participating in different roles, for example; the Deputy Chair of the Committee would be chairing the Strategic Priorities Task & Finish Group.

### **ITEM 4: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

9. There were none.

### **ITEM 5: MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 2 JUNE 2015**

10. With the amendments of:
  - Minute 215, to add 'Winchester City Council' to the list of Councils that had been working together to address the issue of litter; and
  - Minute 224 and 225, to add 'and the first iteration of the Corporate Plan for 2017-18 and beyond' after the text '3<sup>rd</sup> year of the 2014-17 Corporate Plan'.The minutes of the meeting held on 2 June 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **ITEM 6: MATTERS ARISING**

11. Minute 217 Meon Valley Trail: Hampshire County Council (HCC) had completed work on the trail, and whilst some individuals remained concerned about the surfacing, a steady trickle of positive views were emerging with regard to the enjoyment and accessibility of the trail.

The South Downs Local Access Forum (SDLAF) had been asked to gather some objective evidence on the experiences across the Park of multi user trails in order to provide a wider frame of reference to inform future projects, both for the SDNPA and the relevant Highway Authorities.

- The Committee commented on:
  - The importance of considering suitable surfacing materials, and learning from previous Rights of Way (RoW) projects where surfacing had been an issue.
  - The need to raise public understanding that the surfacing material used for RoW was normally determined by the relevant County Council, as the Highways Authority.

Minute 212 Gatwick Airport Consultation: The SDNPA did not hold any air quality data, and therefore had not responded individually to the consultation on Air Quality.

Minute 214 Volunteering Fair: This would be held on 7 November 2015 at the South Downs Centre.

Minute 239 Interim findings from the research into nitrate trends: This would be included in the report on Research Activity to be considered at the October 2015 Committee meeting.

Minute 216 Shared Identity:

- The Committee commented: that there was a need for the roll-out to gather more momentum, particularly with regard to communities and small businesses.
- In response to questions, officers clarified:
  - Members would have the opportunity to debate the Shared Identity rollout in October following the Communications Strategy report, and the Strategic Priorities Task and Finish Group could focus on this further.
  - There was a resource to fund an intern for the Communications Team.
  - The map indicating the Shared Identity projects underway had been updated.

## **ITEM 7: UPDATES ON PREVIOUS COMMITTEE DECISIONS**

12. There were none.

## **ITEM 8: URGENT MATTERS**

13. There were none.

## **ITEM 9: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

14. There was none.

## **ITEM 10: FORWARD BUSINESS FOR 2015-16**

15. The Committee received a verbal update from the Director of Strategy & Partnerships.
16. The Committee requested future discussions on the following:
- The Stanmer Park project
  - Brighton & Lewes Biosphere
  - The South Downs Way, including future funding of National Trails and the rerouting of the path at the Winchester end.
17. In response to questions, officers clarified:
- The ICT Strategy Manager would be undertaking a gap analysis of the SDNPA's IT requirements. A new ICT strategy to meet the organisation's operational needs would be completed by December.
  - The Woodland Bats project was considered by the National Trust to be one of their national priority programmes, focusing on the improvement of woodland habitat at a landscape scale.

## ITEM 11: LEARNING AND OUTREACH UPDATE AND WAY AHEAD

18. The Committee considered the report by the Learning, Outreach & Volunteer Lead (PP12/15).
19. The Committee commented:
  - The work was important and fitted with the National Park's Purpose 2, offering long-term benefit to the SDNPA, and could be considered by the Strategic Priorities Task & Finish Group.
  - On the strong penetration within schools and formal learning, and their commendation of officers for achieving so much with limited funding.
  - On the importance of ensuring sufficient resource was available to the team in the future.
  - On the need to consider external funding to ensure major projects were sustainable.
  - Education projects could generate significant media interest, and be uniquely interesting to potential sponsors.
  - A financial section in future reports, which included the full cost of the core work/projects, how they were funded, & for how long, would be helpful to the Committee.
  - Some Local Authority appointed Members were also school governors, and could assist in circulating the Education & Outreach newsletter to this network.
  - On the value of social media and informal exchange in encouraging the participation of young people.
20. In response to questions, officers clarified:
  - There was a higher level of engagement in urban areas outside the National Park boundary as there was a higher concentration of schools in these areas.
  - The Learning and Outreach schools engagement model was scalable and allowed growth of a wide network via ambassador schools.
  - Support was being provided to teachers who could assist other schools in order to increase participation levels.
  - The Teachers Conference gave the opportunity to showcase examples of outdoor learning in the National Park.
  - The Student Conference was aimed at those in further education interested in work placements and carrying out research aligned with the National Park purposes.
  - Work was being undertaken to engage young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) in volunteering activities as a means of connecting with the National Park.
  - Less formal engagement with young people was being carried out at events throughout the National Park.
  - The South Downs John Muir Award, which involved discovering, exploring, conserving and sharing a wild place was a further way to informally engage young people and others.
  - A work placement student was currently analysing feedback from participants in a youth model of the Campaign for National Parks (CNP) Mosaic project that had been championed in 5 National Parks.
  - A group of national parks Learning and Outreach officers were looking with National Parks UK at sponsorship and funding options for projects, including the Travel Grants Scheme. However core work would require on-going funding from the SDNPA.
  - The barriers to enjoying national parks had been researched by the CNP work with users and non-users of national parks, and were specific to individual social groups, and mitigation work was being carried out through partnership projects such as Sompriti.
  - The ambition to develop a youth forum was a Partnership Management Plan (PMP) objective, and work was being done by National Park education officers to develop a vehicle for informal dialogue, which could initially be used as part of the Local Plan consultation.

- Sponsorship for 3D simulation to develop content for a virtual SDNP was being considered.
- Our South Downs had been developed to appeal to young people, with information that could be accessed with widgets and video content.
- A link to the ARC (Arun & Rother Connections) Explorer app, which had been part-funded by the SDNPA, would be forwarded to Members.

21. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee

- 1) Supported the direction being taken in the SDNPA's Learning and Outreach work
- 2) Noted the progress made in these areas to date.

## **ITEM 12: ICT REVIEW – FINAL REPORT**

22. The Committee considered the report by the Business Services Manager (Report PPI3/15).

23. The Committee asked for their congratulations to be passed to officers for their efficient management of the recent service migration, which had been very smooth. They commented on the forward thinking approach that had been taken.

24. In response to questions, officers clarified:

- The report had been presented to the Committee to inform the conclusion of the tender, and to approve the new direction of travel. A full gap analysis would be performed by the ICT Strategy Manager, and any efficiencies or recommended changes to infrastructure would be brought back to the Committee at the December meeting.
- The printers were hired on a 3 year lease

25. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee noted progress made with the provision of ICT services.

## **ITEM 13: THE SOCIAL VALUE ACT AND THE SDNPA**

26. The Committee considered the report by the Business Services Manager (Report PPI4/15).

27. The Committee commented:

- It was important legislation that could be used to assist local businesses and landowners.
- The legislation required public authorities to have regard to their local community's economic, social and environmental well-being when negotiating contracts and procurement, which were was open to public scrutiny.
- On the importance of supporting the messages of the Social Value Act, and for the SDNPA to show leadership by seeking exemplar procurement outcomes that did not cost more, and could offer future re-procurement opportunities.
- On the need for the Committee to further debate the implications of procuring locally sourced/ sustainable goods versus cost.
- Consideration of the Social Value Act should be added to officer reports under section 9. Sustainability.

28. In response to a question, officers clarified that contracts over £5K were normally advertised by the SDNPA on the Government 'Contracts Finder', however this was not a legal requirement.

29. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee noted the current procurement practices in relation to the Social Value Act and other relevant Procurement legislation.

## **ITEM 14: WEST SUSSEX RURAL PARTNERSHIP MID PROJECT REVIEW**

30. The Committee received a [PowerPoint presentation](#) from the Sustainable Futures Manager, which is available on the Authority website.

## **ITEM 15: WORKING WITH LEPS AND LEADER**

31. The Committee received a [PowerPoint presentation](#) from the Sustainable Futures Manager, which is available on the Authority website.

32. The Committee gave their thanks for the comprehensive updates; which was, the first time an overview of the Authority's relationship with those outside bodies had been brought to the Committee, and commented:

- On the importance of the Authority Chair remaining on the Coast to Capital Joint Committee in order to influence funding for projects that were aligned with PMP priorities such as broadband.
  - On the scale and success of the West Sussex Rural Partnership, which had been sustained following appointment of a director.
  - Consideration of the implication of the recent Cities and Local Government Devolution bill, particularly with regard to infrastructure, could be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.
  - More information regarding potential funding bids, including whether projects were aligned with PMP outcomes, staffing resource and opportunity cost, was required before Members could agree the prioritisation of individual bids to LEPs or LEADER.
  - They gave their endorsement of the direction of travel, and encouragement to officers to apply in the meantime for upcoming funding with a short-term time frame.
33. In response to questions, officers clarified:
- Coast to Capital had asked the SDNPA to be involved with ongoing data work, and had provided draft data for consideration.
  - A report considering the SDNPA's future direction and strategic priority work with the LEPs and LEADER, should be presented to a future Committee meeting.

#### **ITEM 16: MOBILE INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT**

34. The Committee received a [PowerPoint presentation](#) from the Sustainable Futures Manager which is available on the Authority website.
35. The Committee commented on the need for clear evidence of how the market was developing before investment was made in a technology that could be outdated in future.
36. In response to questions, officers clarified:
- Any proposed leases were subject to negotiation with land owners.
  - The proposed not spot masts were of a sufficiently low height to avoid the need for red warning lights at night.
  - The masts had been designed to be shared by all four mobile operators at the outset, which would avoid the need for further bolt-ons or upgrades.
  - Current microcell and high-speed broadband initiatives did not offer a not-spot solution as they covered small geographical areas where mobile infrastructure already existed.

#### **ITEM 17: HEATHLANDS REUNITED – AN UPDATE ON THE STAGE II HLF BID**

37. The Committee received a [PowerPoint presentation](#) from the Heathland Project Officer, which is available on the Authority website.
- The Committee commended the officers' work to date and commented that the inclusion of PR in the costings was a positive step.
38. In response to questions, officers clarified:
- Grazing would be carried out by cattle owned and managed by the National Trust and Wildlife Trusts.
  - The recent case of bovine TB had been appropriately and promptly dealt with by the Sussex Wildlife Trust.
  - The project's focus was now primarily on people and communities, rather than habitat restoration.

#### **CHAIR**

The meeting closed at 1:42pm.