

Report to	Policy & Programme Committee
Date	26 May 2016
By	Performance and Project Manager
Title of Report	Annual review of Strategic Fund, and the Sustainable Communities Fund and Local Project Support

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

- 1) Receive the overview of major project delivery and the year-end budget position of the Strategic Fund**
- 2) Receive the year-end position of the Sustainable Communities Fund and Local Project support**

1. Summary and Background

- 1.1 This report provides the year-end progress of major projects and provides an overview of the current position of the Strategic Fund (SF), which is the budget used to support major projects. The Committee is asked to receive this information in accordance with its terms of reference which are to exercise oversight of the Strategic Fund and the Sustainable Communities Fund (SCF).
- 1.2 Major projects are defined as those which are over £50,000 as well as those which require a funding commitment of more than one year calendar year from the scheduled commencement date and involve more than one external partner. Projects meeting that definition are approved by the Policy and Programme Committee (P&P Committee). Projects where the SDNPA contributions exceed £100,000 are approved by the full National Park Authority (NPA). All other projects are approved by the Senior Management Team (SMT). 8 new projects have been approved during the year.
- 1.3 The report also provides an overview of the [Sustainable Communities Fund](#) for the year. 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. 13 new projects were funded during 2015-16.
- 1.4 In addition, the report provides an overview of the local projects supported by Area Teams from locally held budgets. 96 projects were funded during the year.

2. Major Projects

- 2.1 There were 4 major projects with funding approved from the Strategic Fund during the year. There are 6 major projects underway in total; 6 major projects were completed during the year. The table at **Appendix I** shows the current position for each of them.
- 2.2 The [Brighton CHAMP project](#) (Brighton Chalk Integrated Catchment Management Partnership) was approved at the June 2015 meeting of this Committee. It allocated £100,000 over 4 years.

- 2.3 New projects approved at SMT included, £7,800 for Celebrating Historic Buildings and additional funding of £10,000 for one year for the Rural West Sussex Partnership and funding for Fieldfare LEADER support of £5,000, details are in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.4 SMT also approved projects with SDNPA funding which are currently seeking external funding. Life Plus Bats (£33,871), Mosaic Youth Project (£12,000) and Reeves Photographic – Life Seen Through a Glass Plate (£5,000). SMT also approved the outline of a project Defence of the Downs however, subsequent to this decision, a review of the scope of the project is being carried out which may result in a slightly different project proposal coming forward. Brief outlines of these projects are at **Appendix 2**.
- 2.5 The table below sets out the current position of the Strategic Fund. The Annual budget has been updated to reflect the [budget](#) set in March 2016. Members will note that the £220,000 allocated for 2016-17 has been extrapolated for the following two years but no assumptions about funding beyond 2018-19 have been made at this stage.

	Budget 2016-17	Budget 2017-18	Budget 2018-19	Budget 2019-20	Budget 2020-21
Annual Budget	220,000	220,000	220,000	TBC	TBC
Carried forward	127,471	190,947	329,973	484,199	447,425
Total Budget	347,471	410,947	549,973	484,199	447,425
Requirement for funding	156,524	80,974	65,774	36,774	36,745
Estimated funding available	190,947	329,973	484,199	447,425	410,680

3. Sustainable Communities Fund

- 3.1 The SDNPA, through the SCF, has committed £67,255 on 13 new sustainable community and Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) projects across the National Park. A list of these projects for 2015-16, their match funding and geographical spread can be found in **Appendix 3** along with a summary of the financial position of the fund. The uncommitted SCF budget in 2015-16 was £75,154 comprising £20,000 allocated from the budget and a carry forward of £35,134 and clawback of £20,020 from projects that did not complete or did not, in the end, happen from previous years.

4. Local Projects

- 4.1 In addition to the above budgets there is a local project budget held and used by the four Area Teams. It is used in one of two ways, either as financial support for action by a community or land manager, or to pay for direct SDNPA interventions where this would not otherwise occur. Projects include restoration or enhancement of the landscape and its biodiversity, cultural heritage, interpretation and management and improvement of access.
- 4.2 96 projects were funded during 2015-16 at a cost of £130,517. A list of these projects, their match funding and geographical spread can be found in **Appendix 4**. Case studies showcasing these projects are produced on a regular basis and are available on the intranet for Members to view.

5. P&P Committee Considerations

- 5.1 The [mid-year review of major projects and the SCF](#) was reported to the Policy & Programme Committee meeting in October 2015.

6. Other Implications

Implication	Yes/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	No
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	No
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	Implications of this report in itself do not raise an issue of value for money. However the projects that the organisation has funded are assessed for value for money when they are approved. Where appropriate, this is part of the project approval reports received by this Committee. Projects are evaluated individually for value for money when they finish. This is reported regularly to the Governance Committee.
Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal?	No
Has due regard been taken of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	Yes – as the subject matter of the report is an update on projects and funding no specific issues arise. Consideration of equalities issues are considered as part of the development of a project.
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	No
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	No
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	No
Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the SDNPA Sustainability Strategy: 1. Living within environmental limits 2. Ensuring a strong healthy and just society 3. Achieving a sustainable economy 4. Promoting good governance 5. Using sound science responsibly	No – not directly although as part of the process for developing projects and when they are approved sustainability issues are included as part of the process.

7. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

- 7.1 There are no significant risks associated with the subject matter of this report. All projects funded from the Strategic Fund have their own risk registers, which are monitored regularly.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Unforeseen changes to the level of funding	Likely	Minor	A robust monitoring and project approval system and regular reporting to this

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
provided by relevant Government departments for future years			Committee on projects and the budget available
Reputational risk if we are unable to provide cash match funding for some of our larger projects	Possible	Moderate	Work to generate income for the South Downs National Park and also potentially for the SDNPA. A robust monitoring and project approval system and regular reporting to this Committee on projects and the budget available

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Appendices

1. Overview of Major Projects
2. Pen Sketches of Named Projects
3. SCF Map and Budget Summary (A3 standalone page)
4. Area Project Map and Table of Projects (A3 standalone page)

SDNPA Consultees Chief Executive; Director of Strategy & Partnerships; Director of Planning; Directory of Operations; Director of Corporate Services; Chief Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer; Legal Services, Governance and Support Services Manager
External Consultees None
Background Documents [Mid-year project update October 2015 report to P&P](#)
[Appendix 1](#)
[Appendix 3](#)
[Rural West Sussex Mid project update July 2015](#)
[Working with LEPs and LEADER verbal update July 2015](#)
[Secrets of the High Woods & Food and Drink Portal mid project updates](#)

Strategic fund projects performance monitoring, end of year 2015-16



Strategic investment fund - projects approved 2015-16

Title	Period	RAG	Progress Status	Cost Status	SDNPA spend to date	SDNPA £	Total project £	Baseline Start Date	Baseline End Date	Comment
Brighton CHAMP - general project overview	Q4 15/16	⊖	On Track	On Budget	25000	100000	311000	01 Jul 2015	31 Mar 2017	Brighton Chalk Integrated Catchment Management Partnership (CHaMP) project started in Autumn 2015. Aims to protect and improve the quality of groundwater in the Brighton Chalk so it is a sustainable resource for the public water supply to c365k people. Three phases to project. Phase 1 started and includes advice and support to land managers e.g. nitrate precision farming trial.
Fieldfare LEADER-outreach support	Q4 15/16	⊖	On Track	On Budget	0	5000	348000	01 Jan 2016	31 Dec 2020	LEADER is the element of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) which delivers locally determined small grants for rural small & micro businesses, farm innovation/diversification, tourism, culture & heritage, small scale renewables and rural services. There are four LEADER Local Action Groups (LAGs) operating across the SDNP, one of which is Fieldfare, which has been allocated £1.6m over the lifetime of the programme to Dec 2020. Of this 18% (or £288k) is allocated for Management & Administration. Winchester City Council (WCC, the Accountable Body) have conducted a review of the programme costs and concluded that there is an operating deficit of £59,555.65 over the lifetime of the programme (i.e. to Dec 2020). This is due to Fieldfare having received less than they bid for the request to SDNPA is for in-kind assistance by conducting two appraisals and for a one-off payment of £5k to specifically support outreach work in the SDNP.
Rural West Sussex Partnership- Overview	Q4 15/16	⊖	On Track	On Budget	37500	60000	160000	01 Apr 2014	31 Mar 2017	SMT approved continuation funding for 2016/17, at a reduced level, for the Rural West Sussex Partnership (RWSP) as the key sub-partnership for the SDNP within the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership (C2C LEP). The partnerships funding is made-up by partner organisations. WSCC provided £25k, C2C gave £10k with the constituent Districts and Boroughs (D&Bs) giving £5k each, all per annum. SDNPA funded the partnership at £25k p.a. for its first two years (FYs 13/14 & 15/16) committing a higher level of funding than the D&Bs as it covers a larger area in West Sussex. We propose that the SDNPA funding is reduced to £10k (16/17) with the other funding partners asked to make up the difference (total required 75k). The RWSP's Director (Simon Matthews) has been highly effective in influencing C2C policy and implementation, especially as regards the rural agenda. Gains to date have been: * Getting designated Rural Growth Navigators as part of C2C's business advice service; * Obtaining £450k Local Growth Fund money for two rural broadband pilots; * Organising a workshop for potential applicants for the EAFRD Tourism Cooperation call and coordinating applications; and * Developing and assisting with the £400k Wood Processing Grant Programme.

Pen Sketches for Projects mentioned in paragraph 2.4 of the Report

Life Plus Bats project aims to restore and reconnect a high-quality matrix of woodland habitats to enhance biodiversity, landscapes, and dark night skies. The project will help to address the following key threats:

- Loss, degradation and fragmentation of semi-natural woodland and associated habitats;
- Threats to populations of key woodland species (for example barbastelle and Bechstein's bats, for which the project area is a stronghold);
- Loss of dark night skies (the project area is the best in the Park for dark night skies, but increasing development and associated increased associated lighting levels would degrade dark night skies);
- Lack of sustainable woodland management

It was approved by SMT in October 2015. The National Trust which is the lead partner, submitted a funding bid to Life+ in October 2015. Feedback received by the National Trust, is that the project did not pass the technical requirements for EU funding. It is likely that the bid will be amended and resubmitted, however this is subject to further discussion. The money allocated will be held in the Strategic Fund pending a decision on resubmission.

Mosaic Youth Project is led by the Campaign for National Parks which aims to use the established model of community champions to engage young people facing social or economic exclusion (16-25) to engage with the South Downs National Park. This project will seek to provide opportunities for:

- More young people to find out about and use the SDNP
- Young people to learn about the SDNPA and how it is run
- Young people, staff, members or volunteers to work together and make changes to specific programmes and policy
- Involving young people from a wide range of backgrounds as visitors and ambassadors in the long term.
- Young Champions will
- Learn about and explore the SDNP through taster days and at least one residential visit
- Take part in training towards making a difference to the SDNP
- Take part in an Internship opportunity

The project is part of a wider initiative and is supported by a number of other National Parks and the Youth Hotel Association. It was approved by SMT in October 2015.

Reeves Photographic – Life Seen Through a Glass Plate

The purpose of the project is to understand the importance of the Reeves Archive to tell the story of Lewes people and places during World War I – and the impact of WWI on Lewes as the Home Front. It will:

- Find, scan and catalogue glass plates
- Make a database and images available via web site
- Research stories of local people
- Communicate and interpret this story to the widest community via:
 - Exhibitions and a booklet
 - Web site, publicity and promotion
- Engaging people including recruiting and training 60 new volunteers
- Producing learning resources: for primary and secondary schools
- Increasing understanding of the importance of the War Memorial – with a model on display after 80 years

The SDNPA contribution was approved by SMT in February 2015. The project was not successful in gaining HLF funding. Officers are currently exploring alternative funding options to allow the project to go ahead.