

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY POLICY & PROGRAMME COMMITTEE MEETING 25 MAY 2017

Held at the Memorial Hall, South Downs Centre, Midhurst at 2.00pm

Present:

Ken Bodfish (Chair)	Janet Duncton	Mark Dunn	Jo Carr
Helen Jackson	Daniel Humphreys	Pete West	Sue Saville
Margaret Paren (ex officio)	Norman Dingemans (ex officio)		

Other SDNPA Members:

Barbara Holyome

SDNPA Officers: Andrew Lee (Director of Countryside Policy and Management), Trevor Beattie (Chief Executive), Karen Everett (Deputy Monitoring Officer), Steven Bedford (Principal Accountant), Alan Brough (Head of Business Services) and Robin Parr (Head of Governance).

Other SDNPA Officers: Paul Barnes (ICT Strategy Manager) Anne Rehill (Performance and Project Manager) and Jeremy Burgess (Landscape and Biodiversity Lead (Water))

OPENING REMARKS

154. The Chair welcomed all those present and stated that:

- SDNPA Members have a primary responsibility for ensuring that the Authority furthers the National Park Purposes and Duty. Members regard themselves first and foremost as Members of the Authority, and will act in the best interests of the National Park as a whole, rather than as representatives of their appointing body or any interest groups.

ITEM 1: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

155. Apologies were received from Phillip Ede.

ITEM 2: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

156. Daniel Humphreys declared a public service interest in Item 16 as the Leader of Worthing Borough Council.

ITEM 3: MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 28 FEBRUARY 2017

157. The minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

ITEM 4: MATTERS ARISING

158. There were none

ITEM 5: UPDATES ON PREVIOUS COMMITTEE DECISIONS

159. There were none.

ITEM 6: URGENT MATTERS

160. The Chief Executive advised that the Governance Committee had approved the recommendations of the Governance review and these would now be submitted to the full Authority for approval. If agreed it was expected that the first meeting of the new Policy and Resources Committee would be on the 20th July.

161. The Chief Executive also advised that an objection had been received from the National Trust in relation to the name of the South Downs National Park Trust. It was stressed that the Authority needed to maintain good relations with the National Trust as a key partner, however the Authority was committed to the South Downs National Park Trust brand. Further meetings were planned in an attempt to resolve this matter.

ITEM 7: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

162. There were none.

ITEM 8 NEED FOR PART II EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

163. It was proposed and seconded to exclude any Press and Public during consideration of items 15 & 16 on the basis that it was likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if a member of the public were present during the items there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, being information relating to the financial and business affairs of individuals companies and other organisations and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exempt information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, Following a vote the proposal was carried.
164. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee move into Part II (private session) for consideration of item 15 and 16 and exclude any members of the public and press from the meeting at that time.

ITEM 9: PROGRESS WITH REVIEW OF PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT OF FIVE YEAR STRATEGIES

165. The Committee considered report PP06/17 and a presentation by the Director of Countryside and Policy Management.
- The Committee commented:
- The range of partners involved in delivering the Partnership Management Plan (PMP) could be reviewed to identify any obvious gaps, or to remove any partners that were no longer relevant to the delivery of the PMP. A wider range of delivery vehicles could be considered for the PMP, such as the farm clusters.
 - The key messages around the impact that the Park Authority and the PMP were having on the National Park needed to be better communicated. It was suggested that public relations should be included as a consideration when projects were being set up to ensure important messages were identified and shared.
 - It was important that the PMP did not just record activity, but demonstrated where value was being added to the National Park
166. The Committee was advised that:
- The purpose of the partnership was not solely related to the delivery of the PMP, but also the wider identify of the National Park
 - Work was underway with partners to investigate ways to improve communication about projects and partnerships the PMP and partners and the SDNPA deliver
 - If additional funding was required for public engagement as part of the PMP review then a request would be made at the appropriate time
 - One purpose of the PMP was to create a sense of pride in the National Park and it was important that the policies were framed appropriately and all partners were held to account for its delivery
167. **RESOLVED:** the Committee received the report and presentation and endorsed the approach taken so far.

ITEM 10: Establishment of an Enterprise and Investment Task and Finish Group

168. The Committee considered report PP12/17 by the Chief Executive who advised the Committee:
- The 2017/18 budget round had established a series of tests to be applied to the creation of a capital programme for the Authority
 - It was anticipated that the Authority may be approached by a number of bodies with a view to the SDNPA potentially acquiring assets, and whilst none had yet been forthcoming it was expected that an approach may be made by East Sussex County Council in relation to the Seven Sisters Country Park.
 - There was a need to approach such opportunities in a systematic way and draw on the

widest possible pool of experience, in particular members of the Authority whose input should be sought at the earliest possible stage.

169. The Committee commented that:

- The proposed terms of reference should be amended to remove references to annual reporting and to state that the group should make its report within 6 months
- It was proposed that, in order to speed up the establishment of the group that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of the committee and Chair of the Authority to contact the whole Authority membership to seek volunteers to be part of the group.

170. **RESOLVED:** That the committee:

- Agreed to the establishment of an “Enterprise and Investment Task and Finish Group” with the terms of reference set out at Appendix I of the report as amended at the meeting
- Delegated Authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of the Committee and Chair of the Authority to appoint the membership of the Task and Finish Group.

ITEM 11: Provisional Outturn and Budget Carry Forward Requests for 2016/17

171. The Committee considered report PP07/17 by the Chief Finance Officer.

172. The Committee noted that:

- A £29k variance on a £12 million budget was a good year end position.
- All carry forward requests were subject to detailed consideration by SMT prior to recommendation for approval.

173. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee:

- 1) Noted the provisional revenue outturn position for the financial year 2016/17 which is a net overspend of £29,000.
- 2) Approved the budget carry forward requests to 2017/18 of £605,000 set out in Appendix 3.
- 3) Noted the impact on reserves and implications for the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
- 4) Noted the current Treasury Management overview and position.

ITEM 12: Annual review of Strategic Fund, the Sustainable Communities fund and Local Project Support

174. The Committee considered report PP08/17 by the Performance and Project Manager.

175. The Committee noted that:

- The attendance of the Chair of the Sustainable Communities Fund at future meetings to speak to the committee about the fund would be positive.
- All major projects were on track, with the exception of the Secrets of the High Woods project which was slightly behind timescale in relation to its final reporting.
- Funding previously allocated to the Life+ bats project had been returned to the funding pot as the second application for HLF funding to support the project had been refused. If a new proposal was brought forward by the National Trust, which is the lead partners for this project, it would be reconsidered and it was stated that a future iteration of this project may help provide useful evidence for the local plan.

176. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee:

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

Pete West left the meeting at this point

ITEM 13: Planning Administration Systems

177. The Committee considered report PP09/17 by the ICT Strategy Manager.
178. The Committee commented that:
- There was a need to closely monitor the requirements of this procurement exercise to ensure the complexities of these systems required were appropriately identified.
 - Testing would need to be taken into account to ensure any transition to a possible new solution did not interrupt service delivery
 - There was a need to be cognisant of what systems our partners were using in delivering planning administration services
179. The committee was advised that:
- The procurement of a new system was complicated by the host arrangements and the need to deliver across a range of authorities.
 - Any new supplier would need to provide a costed migration plan including meeting training requirements for staff.
180. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee:
- 1) Agreed that SDNPA aim to consolidate into a single contract the existing Planning Administration System contracts that are due to expire on 31 March 2018.
 - 2) Delegated authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of the Authority and Chair of the relevant Committee to undertake the procurement process, to involve a competitive process carried out under the terms of the Crown Commercial Services Framework agreement, and award the contract(s) for the Planning Administration Systems.

Janet Duncton left the meeting at this point

ITEM 13: Mid Project update

181. The Committee considered report PP10/17 by the Performance and Project Manager and the Landscape and Biodiversity Lead (Water).
182. The Committee commented that:
- This was one of the most important projects that the Authority was involved in.
 - There was a need to increase public awareness of the project and its outcomes.
 - It was positive that Southern Water were engaged as partner.
183. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee received the mid project update and noted progress on the Brighton ChaMP project

At this juncture the committee moved into private session

ITEM 15: Exempt Minutes of the Previous Meeting Held on 28 February 2017

184. The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

ITEM 16: Response to Consultation for the A27 Lancing and Worthing

185. The Authority received consider report 11/17 from the Landscape Officer in relation to SDNPA consultation response for the A27 Lancing and Worthing.

CHAIR

The meeting closed at 16.07 pm.