

Report to	<b>Policy and Resources Committee</b>
Date	<b>21 November 2017</b>
By	<b>Performance and Projects Manager</b>
Title of Report	<b>Project Evaluation Report – Heathlands Reunited</b>

**Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to**

- 1) Receive the end of year 1 project evaluation for Heathlands Reunited at Appendix 1**
- 2) Agree any recommendations to officers as a result of the learning from the evaluation**
- 3) Agree that the learning from the evaluation be added to the improvement plan as set out in Appendix 2**

**1. Summary and Background**

1.1 This report presents one project evaluation for consideration by the Policy and Resources Committee. The Committee is asked to consider the evaluation report and identify any recommendations it may wish to make as a result of the learning points and themes highlighted. The Committee is also asked to agree the corporate learning to be added to the improvement plan. This report contains 1 evaluation report.

**2. Heathlands Reunited year 1 evaluation**

2.1 Lowland heathland is one of the rarest and most threatened habitats in the world. In the project area over 85% of heathland habitat has been destroyed since 1800, mirroring the national trend. Heathland sites in the project area continue to be under intense pressure from development and other human-related activities.

2.2 Heathland covers 1% of the National Park. It supports a wide variety of specialist birds, rare insects and butterflies, as well as twelve species of native reptiles and amphibians. Much of the heathland is fragmented which leads to isolation of species and makes them more vulnerable to extinction.

2.3 Heathlands Reunited is a 5 year project which involves work with 11 partners on 34 sites to restore and re-create 648ha of heathland and 9km of heathland corridors. This delivers the project vision for bigger, better, joined-up heathland in the South Downs National Park that people know about, care about, and use responsibly and sustainably.

2.4 In addition to the practical works, the project aims to inspire people to visit heathland sites, enjoy and learn about them, and use them responsibly. It seeks to reach thousands of people through communication, education and engagement; work with community groups, including under-represented audiences such as disabled people; train and support 200 volunteers who will contribute at least 5,700 days, and train two apprentices in heathland management skills.

2.5 The total project cost is projected to be £2.37 million. This includes a grant from HLF for £1.44 million, which represents 61% of the total project cost; funding from SDNPA of £150,000 and match funding and in-kind support to the value of £24,750.

- 2.6 The outcomes of the project are intended to be:
- heritage that is better managed, in better condition, identified and recorded
  - people will have developed skills, learnt about heritage
  - for communities, environmental impacts will be reduced, more people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage, the local area/community will be a better place to live, work and visit.
- 2.7 External evaluation is built into the project. This evaluation is one of three reports that will be produced during the life of the project, with data collected from volunteers, partners and local communities. Reports will be produced for year one, year three and at the end of the project in year 5. The evaluation work for the project is carried out by Collingwood Environmental Planning Limited. The end of year 1 evaluation report is at **Appendix 1**.

### 3. Corporate learning

- 3.1 The corporate learning from evaluations is pulled together and added to the improvement plan as appropriate. There are 7 recommendations from this report which have been collated and grouped in the management response. Where recommendations have been accepted they are marked green, where they have been partially accepted they have been marked amber, and where they have not been accepted they have been marked red. The detail is set out in **Appendix 2**. The Committee is asked to agree the additional improvement activity – items marked green and amber, for inclusion in the improvement plan.

### 4. Policy and Programme Committee considerations

- 4.1 The project was approved in [March 2015](#) at the then Resources and Performance Committee and the NPA in [March 2015](#). It was also reported to Policy and Programme Committee as part of annual project reporting in [May 2017](#) and [appendix](#).

### 5. Other Implications

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	No
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	Not in itself although the value for money of the projects themselves are reported as part of the evaluations.
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	Each project is assessed separately for value for money. Overall the project evaluated did represent either appropriate or good value for money.
Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal?	No
Has due regard has been taken of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	Any such considerations are taken into account in the developments of the projects themselves.
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

<p>Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the SDNPA Sustainability Strategy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Living within environmental limits</li> <li>2. Ensuring a strong healthy and just society</li> <li>3. Achieving a sustainable economy</li> <li>4. Promoting good governance</li> <li>5. Using sound science responsibly</li> </ol>	<p>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.</p>
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## 6. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
That learning from projects is not fully captured	2	2	<p>Well understood mechanisms are in place to capture information about the progress of projects and identifying learning through evaluation.</p> <p>Evaluation reports and case studies are routinely produced.</p>
Learning from projects is not fed into future project development	3	2	<p>Improvement planning is in place but there is potential to review and improve how this takes place.</p> <p>Project specific learning is followed up by themed programme boards which meet several times a year. Corporate learning is beginning to be captured and disseminated in a more comprehensive way via a revised improvement plan and in any revisions to guidance that might be deemed appropriate.</p>

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Appendices

1. Appendix 1 – Heathlands Reunited year 1 evaluation
2. Appendix 2 – learning to be added to the corporate improvement plan

SDNPA Consultees: Chief Executive; Director of Strategy & Partnerships; Director of Planning; Director of Operations; Director of Corporate Services; Chief Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer; Legal Services, Governance and Support Services Manager

External Consultees: Report authors for the evaluations consulted SDNPA staff during the development of their evaluation reports.

Background Documents: [Policy and Programme Committee report March 2015](#)

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