

Agenda Item 7
Report NPA25/18

Report to	South Downs National Park Authority
Date	16 October 2018
By	Authority Chair
Title of Report Note	Authority Chair Update

Recommendation: The Authority is recommended to note the update from the Chair of the South Downs National Park Authority.

1. Summary and Background

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the work that has been underway since my last report to the 3 July 2018 National Park Authority (NPA).
- 1.2 As Members are aware, I usually provide a verbal update, but will in future provide a short written report to the NPA.

2. Update on Activities

- 2.1 I attended the AGM of National Parks England (NPE) on 26 September. I was re-elected, unopposed, as Chair of NPE for another year. Mike McLinley, Chair of the Lake District National Park Authority was also elected unopposed as my deputy.
- 2.2 At the meeting we considered progress on the Business Plan and agreed a paper on Ways of Working, which set out a revised scheme of delegation for approving NPE material. We considered a paper which outlined the main issues related to the Agriculture Bill and a Blueprint for a Plan Based Environmental Lead Management Scheme in England. This supports the NPE approach to the implementation of such a scheme in National Parks and has been agreed by RSPB, the National Trust and the Wildlife Trusts. The Board agreed it should now be discussed with the National Farmers Union. There was also a brief discussion on Member allowances and the Lake District NPA will pursue a further approach to HMRC on this issue.
- 2.3 The NPE Board also discussed the Glover Review. Four Chairs and four Chief Executives attended a round table with him at the outset of his 'fact finding'. He has subsequently visited seven National Parks and will visit the remainder over the autumn. These visits are primarily opportunities for him to talk to stakeholders and partners rather than NPAs and this was the case when he visited the South Downs in July. I understand that he has asked for a further round table discussion with NPE Board Members and National Park Officers and this is likely to be late January/early February.
- 2.4 In my capacity as Chair of the NPE Board, I met with George Eustice, Minister for Agriculture. This was focused on the approach to agri-environmental schemes post Brexit and the transition period.
- 2.5 I also met with Lord Gardiner, the Minister responsible for National Parks, on a very hot July day at the New Forest Show to plant an oak tree to commemorate the signing of the National Parks/Forestry Commission Accord. He was accompanied by William Worsley, Defra's tree champion.

- 2.6 I have had one of my regular catch up meetings with Gillian Keegan, the MP for Chichester and we discussed affordable housing amongst other issues. I have also had meetings with the leaders of Chichester District Council and Winchester City Council. Cllr Humby, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport at Hampshire County Council, and I had a meeting with Highways England (HE) to discuss M3 Junction 9. Staying with transport, I have attended two meetings at the Shadow Board of Transport South East representing the protected landscapes of the region. At the AGM in July, I was given full voting rights as was Cllr Gary Wall representing the region's district and borough councils. At the September meeting we discussed the powers we might want to bid for when the Board is placed on a statutory basis.
- 2.7 I also hosted a visit to the area of the South Downs National Park near Winchester by Susan Pyper, Lord Lieutenant for West Sussex, but in her capacity as President of the South Downs National Park Trust.
- 2.8 Finally, I have attended a number of meetings with Executive Board Members of Highways England and their South East Regional Director, but will report on these under Item 10 of the Agenda.
- 3. Conclusion**
- 3.1 As with previous reports, my aim has been to provide an overview of the highlights of the period since my report to the 3 July 2018 NPA, leaving Members to follow up any issues on which they would like more detail or which they would like to discuss further at the Meeting.

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Authority Chair

South Downs National Park Authority

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Appendices	None
SDNPA Consultees	Chief Executive; Director of Strategy & Partnerships; Director of Planning; Director of Corporate Services; Chief Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer; Legal Services, Business Service Manager
External Consultees	None
Background Documents	N/A