

Agenda Item 8
Report NPA34/18

Report to	South Downs National Park Authority
Date	18 December 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

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the work that has been underway since my last report to the 16 October 2018 National Park Authority (NPA).

2. Update on Activities

- 2.1 As Chair of National Parks England (NPE) I have attended a number of meetings. First I had one of my regular meetings with the National Parks Minister, Lord Gardiner. We had a wide ranging discussion about the aspirations of the National Parks. We talked about: the potential role for National Park Authorities in the new Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS) and received encouragement; the Agriculture Bill and our concerns over the rural economy being omitted from it; and the eight-point plan.
- 2.2 I attended a forum of National Parks UK (NPUK) Chairs in Pembroke which discussed rural matters post Brexit. At a previous meeting of NPUK in February we decided to close down that company. However, the necessary legal and financial steps had not been concluded by the time of our Pembroke meeting. The majority of English NPA Chairs had concerns about the proposed commissioning model that had been proposed for the future and as a result delayed the final closure of the company until the Board's next meeting to allow options to be considered.
- 2.3 The main issue of concern regarding the commissioning model was a proposal to form a Communications Team located in the Broads Authority. Most of the English Chairs were concerned that this was proposed to be a UK team when National Parks were a devolved matter with increasing divergent policy framework in England, Scotland and Wales. There were also concerns over governance and financing. Accordingly a decision was deferred until a meeting in February of CEO's to provide an opportunity for Chairs to consider with their NPA's as necessary and for NPE to consider at its meeting in January. It is very likely that South Downs NPA will decline to fund or participate in this proposal should it go ahead.
- 2.4 The NPE Board has had one video conference and a meeting to agree its response to the Glover Review. The final version is attached at **appendix I**.
- 2.5 Following the resolution of the judicial review on Arundel I had a further meeting in my capacity as NPE Chair with Executive Board members of Highways England (HE). We discussed a draft MoU between HE and NPE and I am pleased to report that officers have reached an agreement and the MoU will go to the next NPE meeting in January for

approval. It is planned to have a ministerial launch for the MoU in a National Park in the spring.

- 2.6 I have had one of my regular meetings with Gillian Keegan MP and another with the leader of Chichester District Council. The Local Plan and A27 were discussed at both meetings.
- 2.7 I have met with a delegation from the Czech Republic who were much impressed by the approach to protected landscapes in England.
- 2.8 Finally, I have attended all the sessions of the examination into our Local Plan. We should all be proud of the professionalism of our officers, both those appearing before the Inspector and those supporting the process.
- 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 16 October 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.

MARGARET PAREN

Authority Chair

South Downs National Park Authority

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Appendices	1. NPE response to Landscapes Review Call for Evidence.
SDNPA Consultees	Chief Executive; Monitoring Officer; Head of Governance.
External Consultees	None
Background Documents	N/A