



Mid-project Review: Active Access (2017 – 2020)

Date of Review January 2019

The project This project is part of the ESCC *Active Access for Growth Programme (AAfG)*, a three year DfT funded programme aimed at increasing active travel rates and levels of physical activity amongst target audiences in identified growth areas of East Sussex. Target audiences include unemployed people; apprentices; employees; secondary school and college students and communities. The overall programme is broken down into three parts as follows:

- ES1 Active Access for Business & Workforce Development
- ES2 Active Access for Education & Training
- ES3 Active Access for Healthy Communities

The SDNPA is a delivery partner in ES3 Active Access for Healthy Communities work stream leading on two distinct elements: *Cycle the Downs* and *Walk the Downs*. The specific objectives of the SDNPA elements are:

- To introduce the South Downs National Park to a new audience
- To promote the National Park as an 'on your doorstep' destination for outdoor activity and health and well-being.

The key performance indicators (KPIs) associated with the SDNPA elements of the project include target numbers of cycling and walking activities to be delivered and numbers of participants from targeted groups engaging with the programme. The table at **Appendix I** provides a detailed breakdown of progress against the key deliverables as at December 2018.

Progress to date

The primary focus for delivery to date has been Peacehaven, Newhaven and Seaford, one of the identified growth areas in ESCC's programme. The SDNPA is working with two locally based organisations to develop and run a seasonal programme of activities. Wave Leisure is delivering the *Walk the Downs* programme and Cycle Seahaven is running the *Cycle the Downs* Programme. Eastern Area Rangers are also supporting the *Walk the Downs* activities.

Although the funding programme itself was approved for start in April 2017, it was September before ESCC, the lead authority, was able to bring all the partners on board and commission the full programme. This meant that the SDNPA and other partners spent Q3 and Q4 in Year 1 building networks, identifying delivery partners, and planning a programme of activities for Year 2 2018/2019. Also during this time, SDNPA developed in specific South Downs NP Walk Leader training sessions for rollout in the Year 2 of the programme.

By the end of Q1 in Year 2 SDNPA's two delivery partners had completed either South Downs Walk Leader or Cycle Ambassador training. Both partners had also delivered the planned programme of activities in Q2 and Q3.

Project Successes

The wider Active Access for Growth programme was celebrated at a partner sharing and celebration event in Eastbourne in April 2018. Subsequently, a sharing event took place with the Brighton and Hove partners delivering a similar programme under the DfT Access fund.

For the SDNPA elements of the programme, monitoring and evaluation is supported by a participant baseline survey. Sixty participants have been surveyed to date and follow up surveys will be undertaken at the end of the programme to assess the impact of the activities on participants' levels of physical activity and general health and well-being. Four participants are also taking part in case studies to inform the programme outcomes.

Project Challenges

Although the full of programme of walks and rides was delivered by our partners, including a number of Ranger led walks, overall the SDNPA programme has hit a number of challenges. These are outlined below.

Cycle the Downs: Cycle Seahaven offered a programme of 33 rides, a figure in excess of agreed targets. However, participation rates were significantly below expectations raising concerns about the deliverability of *Cycle the Downs* in Year 3 2019/20. Investigation indicates that a combination of staff illness, poor internal management and marketing of the project by our partners is likely to be the main cause of the poor uptake of this programme to date.

Walk the Downs: Wave Leisure planned and delivered a programme of 37 walks including Health Walks and Rural Rambles. This figure is considerably more than the targeted number of events. However, with the exception of the three walks led by SDNPA Rangers, the majority were poorly attended and participation rates overall were below expectation despite good levels of networking by Wave Leisure within the health network and community groups. The disappointingly low rate of participation in the Walks programme highlights the complexities around engaging with hard-to-reach groups, in this case, people who are fairly inactive and people who may have physical or mental health conditions, for whom 'going for walk' is an alien concept.

Looking forward

Cycle the Downs: For Year 3 2019/20 of the programme structures and procedures are now in place to ensure that Cycle Seahaven's programme of activities is properly promoted, supported and reported accurately. We are also working with other partners in the wider AAfG programme to deliver a number of rides for workplaces in the target area of Eastbourne and to work with the Sussex Community Rail partnership on rides from rail stations for college and school students.

Walk the Downs: Since the delivery of last season's programme of walks, Wave Leisure has strengthened its' relationship with local GPs resulting in a growing number of GP referrals to the walks programme. Wave Leisure is currently taking the identified patients through an introductory First Steps programme of walks enabling the participants to progress to the full *Walk the Downs* programme of Health Walks and for some, the more challenging Rural Rambles. Success rates for social prescribing interventions such as these are often varied. However, we are fairly confident that we will see participation rates grow in the early part of Year 3 2019/20. To complement and support the additional outreach undertaken by Wave Leisure we are scoping out an additional programme of walks supported by Community Transport operators so that participants can be introduced to South Downs locations further afield.

Communication and Marketing: The Communication strategy for both programmes is being reviewed with delivery partners to ensure the programmed activities reach a wider audience for the final year of the project. Marketing activity to date has included twitter and other social media channels; bespoke web pages and promotion at strategic events. However, it is clear that a more targeted approach to marketing the programme of activities is needed in order to reach the required number of participants.

Financial status of the project.

The 3 year Active Access budget comprises external funding from the ESCC's Active Access for Growth programme (£75k); SDNPA Strategic Fund match (£15K). This funding covers SDNPA officer time (0.4 FTE of Cycle Projects Officer) and project delivery budget. This budget also includes further funding for the remainder of the Cycle Project Officer's role within the Authority which delivers core activities alongside other projects outlined in the SDNPA Cycling and Walking Strategy. The budget spend is currently on track with sufficient funds available in the final year of the project to cover the additional activities and events designed to ensure successful delivery against project KPI's.

Sustainability of the project outcomes in the long term.

One of the desired outcomes of the project is for previously inactive people to become more active, taking part in cycling or walking activities on a regular basis and using the National Park for this purpose. The following measures have been built into the project to facilitate this outcome:

- Using local partners such as Wave Leisure and Cycle Seahaven from the outset means that participants can be signposted to follow-on programmes of activity on completion of this project.
- The progressive nature of the programme of walks and rides on offer enables participants to build up the necessary skills and confidence needed to continue taking part in activities outside of any formal programme.
- Participants will be able to download self-guided walks and rides from the ViewRanger App. These walks and rides will complement the programme of guided walks and rides.
- Participants will be able to undertake Cycling and Walking Ambassador training equipping them to promote and support walking and cycling in their communities.

Appendix I

Progress against identified deliverables

Cycle The Downs	Deliverables by March 2020	Progress at Dec 2018
1. Skills Sessions	18 Sessions	Skills sessions to be delivered in 2019/2020
2. Themed Rides	22 Rides	33 rides delivered which is considerably more than targeted
3. Ride Leader Training	3 Sessions	One South Downs Cycle Ambassador session delivered for 12 Ride Leaders. New Ride Leader Training to be delivered in 19/20
4. Support for Challenge Events	6 Events	One event supported at the opening of the Peacehaven Cycle Hub.
5. Number of clients participating in cycling activities	140	23 unique participants and 10 returnees have taken part in the programme. As participants have been fewer than expected this is the key area to be addressed in Year 3 of the programme.
Walk the Downs	Deliverables by March 2020	Progress at Dec 2018
6. Guided themed Walks	24 Walks	37 walks delivered which is considerably more than targeted.
7. Support events – walks linked to bus/rail	3 events	None to date.
8. Walk Leader Training	2 Sessions	2 South Downs Discovery sessions held for 6 Walk Leaders. New Walk Leader Training to follow in 19/20.
9. Number of clients participating in walking activities	160	55 unique participants and 12 returnees have taken part in the programme to date.
Cycle and Walk the Downs combined	Deliverables by March 2020	Progress at Dec 2018
10. Marketing	6 Publications	13 promotional materials 7 web pages 2 press releases Numerous social media activity and postings via Twitter, Facebook, community forums and networking.
11. Number of case studies across both programmes	6	4 case studies are underway