

Report to	South Downs National Park Authority
Date	28 March 2019
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.

I. Update on Activities

- I.1 In January I chaired the NPE Board Meeting. We discussed the forthcoming spending review and how we should position ourselves. Though mindful of the uncertainties surrounding the review and its timing, we decided that in the 70th anniversary year of the legislation which established national parks we should press for a greater role for NPAs in the future. Based on our 'offer' to the Glover Review this encompasses: biodiversity; a bespoke farming and land management scheme; support for mental and physical well-being and every child having the opportunity to experience a national park. This ambitious programme would require additional funding for NPAs from other budgets.
- I.2 We also discussed the provision of communication policy support for NPE and agreed to outsource. We agreed the final wording of an MoU with Highways England and plans for Parliamentary engagement in the celebration of the 70th anniversary. Finally, we agreed to extend work on ELMS to encompass the rural economy.
- I.3 I have met Julian Glover in my capacity as Chair of NPE. This follows on from his one-to-one discussions with National Park Officers and will be followed by a Round Table of all NPA Chairs on 30 April.
- I.4 On 31 January I attended the formal launch of the National Park Experience Collection in the Peak District National Park. The event was attended by the travel trade and media, NPA representatives and providers. The collection has 72 experiences from 9 English National Parks aimed at the Australian and German markets (the SDNPA has 8 experiences and accommodation providers).
- I.5 I also attended the Visit England 30th anniversary awards ceremony on 11 March. As you may have seen in Update, the English National Parks received the 'Outstanding contribution to Tourism' Award. Previous winners include: the Queen, Sir Paul McCartney, the National Trust, the Premier League and Harry Potter. This is a major achievement against our Public Affairs Strategy theme on sustainable tourism, allowing us to promote its messages through all our channels. On the same day we heard that additional funding from the Discover England Fund had been secured to extend the programme for 6 months to deliver additional promotion to the travel trade and an extension to the US market.

- I.6 Closer to home, I recently attended a meeting of the Shadow Board for Transport for the South East where we received an excellent presentation on the work being undertaken on future mobility and the uncertainties surrounding future transportation needs. We also agreed the draft of a consultation on Transport for the South East's proposal to Government. This will be launched on 3 May for a 12 week consultation. I also heard that it is proposed to put the NPE/HE MoU to the next meeting of ADEEPT¹ with a view to their adopting a similar protocol.
- I.7 I attended a meeting of the Coast to Capital LEP Committee of Local Authority Leaders, which received a presentation on the work to be progressed to produce a draft Local Industrial Strategy in the autumn. These documents are jointly developed by the LEP and central government. Although they set out the direction of travel no funding is attached to them.
- I.8 Nick Heasman and I met recently with the Bishop of Chichester to discuss where the Church and NPA could work together. Ideas on the use of churches as overnight accommodation and other contributions to tourism will be taken forward in a meeting of our officers with the diocesan archdeacons.
- I.9 I joined Julie Fawcett at lunch with the President of the South Downs National Park Trust and Lord Lieutenant of West Sussex, Susan Pyper, and two prospective Vice Presidents, both Deputy Lord Lieutenants of their respective counties. Both have confirmed their willingness to take on the role of vice-president of the Trust.
- I.10 I met with Louise Goldsmith, Leader of West Sussex County Council and Caroline Horrill, Leader of Winchester City Council as part of my routine meetings with council leaders. I will be meeting the Leader of Chichester District Council shortly.
- I.11 Finally, I have given an interview to Countryfile Magazine following up my recent interview on Costing the Earth on Radio 4.

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Appendices	None
SDNPA Consultees	Chief Executive; Monitoring Officer; Head of Governance.
External Consultees	None
Background Documents	N/A

¹ Association of Directors of Economy, Environment, Planning and Transport, representing 65 local authorities.