

Report to	South Downs National Park Authority
Date	16 May 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 On this occasion I am going to concentrate my report on the National Park England (NPE) Chairs' Roundtable with Julian Glover and my regular catch up meeting with the National Parks' Minister, Lord Gardiner. Both meetings took place on 30 April.
- I.2 Members may recall that in response to the Glover Review call for evidence, the Board of NPE agreed five opportunities for the future:
 - 1. National Parks being bigger and better places for nature connected by wildlife corridors
 - 2. Bespoke farming and land management schemes and with Government support for rural development
 - 3. A strong new partnership linked to the NHS's prevent initiative with an emphasis on the mental health of young people
 - 4. A commitment that every child should have the opportunity to visit a national park
 - 5. Harnessing the passion for national parks and encouraging visits from hard to reach groups
- I.3 Subsequently further work has been carried out to flesh out these opportunities, cost them in broad terms and identify legislative or other levers necessary to deliver them. Although the opportunities require a substantial increase in funding managed by or through NPAs, virtually all could be funded from other Governmental budgets or through payments for eco-system services, provided Government support was provided for this concept. It is the firm belief of the NPE Board that these changes would result in better targeted and more effective use of the funds concerned.
- I.4 These concepts, developed by the respective expert officer groups drawn from all 10 NPAs were drawn together by the staff of NPE and incorporated into a 'Road Map' that was considered by the CEOs of the 10 NPAs and approved by the Board Members of NPE. This Road Map formed the agenda for the Round Table on 30 April. It was supported by a number of documents previously submitted to the Glover Review and a paper on the rural economy, largely written by officers from the SDNPA with support from the Northumberland NPA.

- I.5 Members may be aware that a number of these opportunities have been picked up by NGOs and reported in the press. Most noticeably, a number of conservation NGOs have criticized the state of biodiversity in National Parks. Although this differs from National Park to National Park and data is difficult to come by, it is the case that the levers and funding available within National Parks is no greater to that elsewhere. So far as the rural economy is concerned, a House of Lords Committee report was published just prior to the Round Table that substantively reached the same conclusions on what needed to be done as the NPE paper.
- I.6 Although we do not and will not know of the findings of the Glover Review until it is published in the autumn, it did appear from the tenor of the discussion that many of the issues raised in the Road Map will feature in the final report.
- I.7 At the meeting with the Minister he expressed support for many of the points we made, in particular the part that could be played by national parks in improving the mental health of young people and the value of getting all children to experience a national park. We discussed with him the need to strengthen: s62 of the Environment Act, which places a duty on statutory undertakers to have regard to national park purposes; and the status of Partnership Management Plans. Both of these could be included in the forthcoming Environment Bill and I pressed that this should happen.
- I.8 The Minister asked for further information to support this case and on our thoughts on the Lords report on the rural economy.

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