

Report to	Policy & Resources Committee
Date	6 June 2019
By	Research and Evidence Officer
Title of Report Decision	Approach to monitoring the Partnership Management Plan Outcomes

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to

- 1. Endorse emerging Partnership Management Plan Indicators (Appendix 1)**
- 2. Recommend to the NPA the preferred approach to ongoing monitoring as set out in this report (paragraph 1.2 and 3.5-3.9)**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is for member to endorse the emerging PMP indicators. The original 35 indicators were designed as long term indicators of progress against the 11 Outcomes and 2050 vision. As such the list has been revised due to adjustments made to the now 10 PMP Outcomes, the addition of new policy areas such as ecosystem services and from the learning gained from the first five years of collection. The PMP Member Task and Finish Group (PMP T&FG), which first met in February 2018, has worked with the Research and Evidence Officer (REO) in the development of this activity.
- 1.2 There have been discussions throughout the process regarding whether to monitor trends, rather than attempting to set targets for all of the indicators across the PMP. To date no definitive conclusion has been reached. It is the opinion of officers that where the SDNPA is entirely responsible for delivery of an indicator it is possible to set meaningful targets. However this approach is not considered suitable for a majority of the indicators in the PMP. Paragraphs 3.5-3.9 set out the reasons for this. A majority of National Parks do not have targets for all of their management plan indicators, some use direction of travel and some do not have any indicators at all but report solely against delivery.
- 1.3 The REO will continue to develop the indicators alongside Strategy Leads. Several areas may continue to be developed further, either as we await the release and confirmation of the Defra 25 year plan indicators or, as we finalise a methodology with partners. Indicators or thematic areas requiring further development at the time of publication will be noted as such.
- 1.4 The PMP indicators will sit alongside the reporting structure for the priority programmes agreed previously by the NPA at its meeting on 16 May Ref: NPA13/19. This included a high level assessment of internal and external project progress against programmes and an annual two page assessment including outputs and case studies from these projects.

2. Policy Context.

- 2.1 National Park Authorities are required by Section 66 of the Environment Act 1995, to produce a Management Plan and to keep it under review. Section 66 (4) specifies that “a National Park Authority shall review its plan within the period of 5 years of its operational date and, after the first review, at intervals of not more than five years”. Section 66 (6) (a-c) requires National Park Authorities to determine if any amendments should be made, make them and then publish a report on the review specifying any amendments made.

3. Issues for consideration

PMP Outcome Indicators

- 3.1 A revised set of Outcome indicators are in development. Where possible we have retained indicators from PMP 2014-19 to ensure the long term monitoring of outcomes in the National Park. However, changes to the policy landscape, outcomes, and lessons learnt from the last five years have meant we have made some changes.
- 3.2 The key areas for development of new indicators include cultural heritage (as the existing indicators are not fit for purpose); health and well-being (as this is a new outcome); climate change adaptation (which all National Parks in England will be required to integrate into their PMP reporting) and ecosystem services and natural capital. A new set of 40 indicators has been produced, see **Appendix I**, and are currently in development with strategy leads. Members are asked to note that some indicators are still in development as new members of staff come into place and suitable methodology or data sources are established.
- 3.3 These indicators are mainly related to: Outcome 2 Ecosystem services and increased resilience to adapt to climate change; Outcome 4 cultural heritage; and Outcome 7 Health and well-being.
- 3.4 Consideration has been given to broader policy context such as the emerging indicators for the Defra 25 year plan, the assumption being that we will be able to adopt these methodologies when they become available.

Targets

- 3.5 The decision was taken not to set targets against the indicators for the PMP 2014-19. A desired ‘direction of travel’ was considered and applied to the indicators and this is reflected in the annual PMP indicator reporting. There are a number of potential risks in adopting a target based approach:-
- 3.6 **Changes in external policy context** – Changes in national policy can have an unforeseen and significant impact on indicators. For example, we have seen a large drop in the percentage of land in agri-environment schemes (79% - 59%) due to the adjustment to countryside stewardship. Against a target this performance would look poor, however, we are actually performing relatively well in adoption of the new schemes.
- 3.7 **Consistency of data / collection** – Several of the indicators are collected or sourced from external organisations. As such there are occasionally changes in survey methodology or the data is no longer supplied and an alternative source must be sought, this can lead to large changes in figures which aren’t a reflection on performance. For example, the percentage of rivers with good or high status fluctuated between 1.2% and 20.4% due to an adjustment in monitoring between WFD cycle 1 and 2.
- 3.8 **No current baseline** – As mentioned there are several new indicators being proposed, it would be not possible to set targets until the current position is fully understood.
- 3.9 **Organisational focus** – Some experience from elsewhere suggests that setting targets against measures reduces their effectiveness. It has been found that setting targets can lead to the focus of work switching to meeting targets rather than delivering the outcome. E.g. should we set a percentage target against the condition of chalk grassland there may be a push towards capital works and quick fixes to meet the target rather than addressing the underlying cause of why the habitat was in poor condition in the first place.

- 3.10 By choosing to monitor trends towards the delivery of an outcome we are able to present the narrative of these indicators more effectively rather than using them to explain why a target has not been met.
- 3.11 There is some exception to the above, specifically in the case of percentage of homes built that are affordable which carries a target of 50% in the emerging Local Plan. This is because the activity is conducted by the authority and the data source is specific and reliable.

Presenting Progress

- 3.12 Progress against all of the PMP indicators will be presented annually, where applicable this will include trends over time. In addition headline statistics will feature in both the SDNPA's Annual Review and the two page SDNP annual infographic approved by the NPA at its meeting on 16 May Ref: NPA13/19.

4. Options & cost implications

- 4.1 The review of indicators has considered best practice and lessons learnt from other National Parks including a broad cross comparison of what they all collect. In addition a comparison against the emerging Defra 25 Year Plan Indicators was undertaken to ensure that we adopt relevant national methodologies where practicable. This approach will allow us to understand our performance in a national context.
- 4.2 Wherever possible national or freely available data sets are used to support the PMP indicators. However, several studies and data sets will still need to be commissioned to support this work. All studies will undergo a rigorous tendering process while data will be sought at best value including purchasing as a consortium either with local or national partners.
- 4.3 Where new indicators have been created there will be a requirement to purchase new data or commission surveys to establish a baseline.

5. Next steps

- 5.1 The REO will work with Strategy Leads and other staff to define and agree as many of the new indicators as possible before the report to the NPA in July. Any indicators that require further development will be completed by the time the PMP is adopted where possible. For those that are dependent on the publication of a nationally supported methodology via the Defra 25 year plan, this may not be feasible. They will be adopted as soon as is practicable.
- 5.2 A written agreement will be produced for all partners to sign setting out what they will deliver and what annual performance data they will provide. A simple and easy to use template for partners to provide this data will be produced.
- 5.3 The REO will work alongside the SDNPA Communications Team to develop the approach to the publication of performance and monitoring information.

6. Other Implications

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	Yes, goes to full NPA alongside the PMP review on 02 July
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	The indicators will require data to be purchased or collected. For the 2014-19 PMP this was calculated at an average of roughly £30k per annum. This will be met from existing budgets
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	Where practicable freely available or open source data sets have been used in order to minimise the amount of data collection that will need to be undertaken by the SDNPA.

Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal?	None
Have you taken regard of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	Yes the activity of monitoring does not have any equalities implication.
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	No
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	None
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	None
Are there any Data Protection implications?	None. All data referring to personal characteristics will be anonymous and / or held at a consolidated level
Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the SDNPA Sustainability Strategy:	Five principles are: Living within environmental limits, Ensuring a strong healthy and just society, Achieving a sustainable economy, Promoting good governance , Using sound science responsibly

7. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Data is unavailable or no longer collected by partner organisations	Medium	Low	The data sources for each indicator are checked thoroughly before inclusion. Where possible alternative/additional data sources are sought.
Partners do not contribute relevant data	Medium	Medium	Ensure all partners sign written agreement. Communicate regularly with partners and demonstrate how their data is being used to demonstrate its value.

ADAM BROWN
Research and Evidence Officer
South Downs National Park Authority

Contact Officer:	Adam Brown
Tel:	01730 819222
email:	adam.brown@southdowns.gov.uk
Appendices	I. Appendix I - Current Indicator List
SDNPA Consultees	Chief Executive; Director of Countryside Policy and Management; Monitoring Officer.
External Consultees	None
Background Documents	NPA13/19

