

Report to	Policy & Resources Committee
Date	6 June 2019
By	External Funding Coordinator
Title of Report	Access Improvements at Youth Hostel Association Truleigh Hill
Decision	

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to approve a £70,000 grant from the Strategic Fund to Youth Hostel Association (YHA) for Access Improvements at YHA Truleigh Hill.

I. Introduction

- I.1 YHA Truleigh Hill is one of the few locations to provide low cost accommodation immediately adjacent to the South Downs Way. However, facilities are dated and access is poor, particularly for the less mobile and for wheelchair and pushchair users.
- I.2 These factors contribute to the decreasing financial viability of the site which, if not addressed, will result in the closure of the facility and reallocation of the resource to more viable sites. Alfriston, Arundel and Winchester YHA operations have already been lost for this reason.
- I.3 YHA have allocated £270,000 to the structural and fabric renovation of the site to address the basic issues which affect all of their customers. This level of work would not address the items of key interest to the National Park which include wheelchair access, disabled parking bays and a fully accessible toilet which will be open to the public at all times.
- I.4 The “added value” items (referred to in I.3) which both organisations would like to see included increase the total project cost to £400,000 and YHA is seeking a £70,000 contribution from the NPA to deliver the additional items, which have been developed with NPA Officers.
- I.5 Funding is also being sought from a number of other sources including West Sussex County Council (the landlord), the National Lottery Community Fund and the Community Infrastructure Levy.
- I.6 The Truleigh Hill Project Officer, who leads the wider Truleigh Hill Project, has been involved in the development of this proposal to ensure that this project complements the broader work which he is undertaking.
- I.7 The detail of this proposal (**Appendices 1 to 4**) has been approved by the Access Theme Programme Board, the Operational Management Team and the Senior Management Team.
- I.8 The National Park Authority grant would be paid in arrears once the project is complete and all monitoring of the deliverables have taken place in order to ensure that the agreed outputs are delivered.
- I.9 The site will continue to be managed and operated by YHA with no further input from the

National Park Authority required.

- 1.10 The Strategic Fund's unallocated budget currently stands at £487,513 and the most recent grants allocated are Maunder Maps (£6,000), Bringing back the Elms (£20,000), Beacon Hub (£40,000), Egrets Way Phase 5 (£35,000) and two projects that form part of the Changing Chalk HLF bid (£115,000).

2. Policy Context.

- 2.1 PMP Outcome 1 – Improved building aesthetics with timber cladding will help Truleigh Hill sit better in the landscape and mitigate some of the negative impacts of the development. This will improve the landscape character of National Park at this prominent location.
- 2.2 PMP Outcome 4 – The project will align the building with the local heritage through interpretation which tells the story of the building in the context of the local cultural heritage. The setting of the cultural heritage assets at Truleigh Hill will be enhanced and be made more accessible to the public.
- 2.3 PMP Outcome 5 – The improved access and accommodation of the site will enhance the visitor experience and the associated benefits such as health and wellbeing.
- 2.4 PMP Outcome 6 – Interpretation will be installed inside and outside of the building and this will further the widespread understanding of the Special Qualities of the Park. Funding has already been secured from National Grid for this and is therefore not the subject of this funding request but the installation has been delayed in order to allow the redevelopment of the site to take place first.
- 2.5 PMP Outcome 9 – The project will provide increased access to improved facilities including toilets, hospitality, wet weather shelter and educational interpretation.
- 2.6 PMP Outcome 10 – An increase in sustainable tourism will lead to a more sustainable local economy which is linked to the Special Qualities of the National Park.
- 2.7 PMP Outcome 11 – An increase in the local economy will increase employment and training opportunities.

3. Issues for consideration

- 3.1 Facilities along the South Downs Way - Truleigh Hill YHA provides facilities directly adjacent to the South Downs Way in an area with relatively few facilities for users of the Way and the local community. The lack of facilities along the South Downs Way is a recognised issue which the National Park Authority is working to address.
- 3.2 Enabling/working in partnership with YHA – The National Park Authority currently has no intention to operate and manage facilities of this nature it is therefore important to support non-profit partners who are well placed to do so and to enable/add value to their work.
- 3.3 Complements existing work streams – Truleigh Hill Project Officer and the South Downs Way Lead (see **Appendix 5**) have been involved in the development of this proposal and are in support.
- 3.4 Levering investment into the National Park – By supporting this project, £330,000 which could be allocated outside of the South Downs, would be invested in the National Park.

4. Options & cost implications

- 4.1 No investment in YHA Truleigh Hill – if this facility is not improved then its medium and long term viability will remain in question and there is a good chance that YHA will cease to operate there. West Sussex County Council (the landlord) or other commercial organisations are unlikely to either invest in the building or operate it as a hostel.
- 4.2 Minimal investment – if further funds are not raised and YHA still opts to invest in the site then the outputs will be limited to important improvements which support YHA's core business and viability. An opportunity to add value, particularly in terms of accessibility for wheelchair and push chair users would be missed.

5. Next steps

- 5.1 If the National Park Authority commits to supporting the project then YHA will engage with the Planning Directorate to gain planning permission for the developments outlined in the bid.
- 5.2 Further fundraising will take place whilst planning permission is being pursued. A number of good fundraising options, such as the National Lottery Community Fund (formerly BIG Lottery), have already been identified. These and new opportunities would be progressed now that the scope of the works have been well defined and the key partnership is confirmed. The project plan suggests fundraising activity up to and including October 2019 if required.
- 5.3 Tendering is due to take place during September and October 2019 and building works are due to take place between November 2019 and March 2020. Fit out/preparation to open will take place in April with an opening/launch in May.
- 5.4 The National Park Authority grant will be paid in arrears once the project is complete and all monitoring of the deliverables have taken place in order to ensure that the agreed outputs are delivered.

6. Other Implications

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	No
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	Yes - £70,000 allocation from the Strategic Fund. External Funding Coordinator will continue to offer fundraising support and will monitor the project prior to the release of any funds – estimated 12 days. Some input from the Truleigh Hill Project Officer may be required although this is not foreseen and would be negligible in terms of resourcing
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	The building contract will be put out to tender by YHA who have great experience in this field and will ensure that the best value for money is secured.
Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal?	No
Have you taken regard of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	Yes - The National Park's specific area of interest in supporting this project is to increase accessibility of the site to those with disabilities and mobility issues.
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	No
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	Yes - The outputs of this project will increase the facility's safeguarding credentials and will therefore decrease the potential for crime and disorder, specifically for vulnerable groups.

Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	Yes - Health and Safety will continue to be managed by YHA in the normal operation of the site. Health and safety will form an important criterion of the tender process in terms of the contractor and the build.
Are there any Data Protection implications?	No
Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the SDNPA Sustainability Strategy?	<p>Yes - This project will specifically contribute to the following principles in the Sustainability Strategy:</p> <p><u>Living within environmental limits</u> – by improving the energy efficiency and sustainability of the building.</p> <p><u>Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society</u> – by improving access to less advantaged groups so that more people can derive the health and wellbeing benefits associated with the National Park.</p> <p><u>Achieving a sustainable economy</u> – an increase in sustainable tourism will have a positive impact on the local economy.</p>

7. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Fundraising target not reached	Medium	High	The External Funding Coordinator will support YHA's Head of Capital Fundraising and Partners to pursue identified and new funding opportunities.
Project runs over budget	Low	High	The works programme has been costed by YHA's building surveyor supported by the professional consultant team which includes a quantity surveyor and project manager. The building work will be competitively tendered to achieve best value and a 5% contingency has been built into the budget.
Changes to the project brief	Low	Medium	The detailed brief will be agreed with partners and a change control procedure will be used to manage any deviation from the brief. The contingency may be utilised for unforeseen work. New opportunities which come to light from the wider Truleigh Hill project can form a second phase of work to be undertaken later.
Project timeline overruns.	Low	Low	The selected contractor will build flexibility and contingency into the construction phase.
Risk of contractor bankruptcy	Low	High	The tender processes will take up references to ensure that the contractor can deliver the project within the set programme, undertake credit checks to ensure liquidity, and the contractor

			performance will be monitored on a weekly basis.
Theft of equipment whilst site is closed for the works to be undertaken.	Low	Medium	Ensure appropriate security measures are in place short turn around deliveries in place. Monitor and revise if required. Site to be fenced off during construction phase.
Failure to meet SDNPA grant conditions	Low	High	Ensure project team are aware of the grant conditions and requirements. Early reporting of potential project essential to SDNPA and other funders. Grant will be paid in arrears once full project monitoring has taken place in order to safeguard the National Park's investment.

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Appendices

1. YHA Truleigh Hill Access Project Brief
2. YHA Truleigh Hill Access Project Budget
3. YHA Truleigh Hill Resource Agreement Form
4. YHA Truleigh Hill EOI presentation
5. Email of support from South Downs Way Lead

SDNPA Consultees

Access Theme Programme Board, Operational Management Team, Senior Management Team, Allison Thorpe, Andy Gattiker, Phillip Paulo; Director of Countryside Policy and Management.

External Consultees

Simon Ainley, Head of Capital Fundraising and Partners, YHA

Background Documents

Theme Programme Board EOI presentation attached in Appendix 4

