



**South Downs**  
National Park Authority

**Agenda Item 19**  
**Report NPA19/20-10**

Report to	<b>South Downs National Park Authority</b>
Date	<b>2 July 2019</b>
By	<b>External Funding Coordinator</b>
Title of Report	<b>Access Improvements at Youth Hostel Association Truleigh Hill</b>
<b>Decision</b>	

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

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 At its meeting on the 6 June 2019 the P&R committee considered a project funding request from YHA in relation to access improvements at Truleigh Hill.
- 1.2 As this meeting was not quorate a decision on the application could not be made and therefore the matter has been placed before the Authority for approval.
- 1.3 The report (**appendix I**) was introduced by Mark Rose (External Funding Coordinator) and Simon Ainley (Head of Fundraising and Partnerships at the Youth Hostel Association) and then led into discussion with the members.
- 1.4 All present committee members spoke in support of the proposal and, although not able to make a decision on the recommendation, members unanimously supported the project and recommended it for National Park Authority approval.

## **2. Policy Context.**

- 2.1 The scheme as sets out contributes to the following outcomes of the SDNPA:
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 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.

- 2.6 PMP Outcome 9 – The project will provide increased access to improved facilities including toilets, hospitality, wet weather shelter and educational interpretation.
- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 PMP Outcome 11 – An increase in the local economy will increase employment and training opportunities.

### 3. Issues for consideration

- 3.1 The members raised a number of queries to which the Head of Fundraising and Partners at YHA responded:
- 3.2 The project would cost £400,000 of which the YHA committed £270,000 leaving a shortfall of £130,000. A number of strong funding options had been identified and these would be pursued once SDNPA's commitment had been confirmed.
- 3.3 The issue of grounds maintenance at the Southease YHA would be raised with the new hostel manager.
- 3.4 The YHA was moving in the direction of providing more locally sourced food in their hostels and were looking at the challenges involved in feeding thousands of children whilst being confident that allergens and contamination would not be a problem.
- 3.5 The Youth Hostel is on a 100 year lease from West Sussex County Council whom had been approached for funding and support but was unable to prioritise it above their other responsibilities. YHA would be very interested in acquiring the freehold for the site and would value any SDNPA support.
- 3.6 The Chief Executives of both the YHA and SDNPA meet regularly and as part of that discussion they had been looking at other potential YHA sites close to the South Downs Way.

### 4. Options & cost implications

- 4.1 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). There are sufficient funds available to support this project bid.

### 5. Next steps

- 5.1 If the National Park Authority commits to financially supporting the project then YHA will engage with the Planning Directorate to gain planning permission for the developments outlined in the bid. Approval of the funding request in no way commits the Authority to any course of action in relation to any future planning applications.
- 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 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.

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be	No

required by another committee/full authority?	
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 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?	Yes - This project will specifically contribute to the following principles in the Sustainability Strategy: <u>Living within environmental limits</u> – by improving the energy efficiency and sustainability of the building. <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. <u>Achieving a sustainable economy</u> – an increase in sustainable tourism will have a positive impact on the local economy.

## 6. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
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. Grant conditions will apply
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. 6<sup>th</sup> June P&R Committee Report
2. YHA Truleigh Hill Access Project Brief
3. YHA Truleigh Hill Access Project Budget
4. YHA Truleigh Hill Resource Agreement Form
5. YHA Truleigh Hill EOI presentation
6. 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

([https://southdowns.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast\\_interactive/397366](https://southdowns.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/397366) )

Theme Programme Board EOI presentation attached in Appendix 4

