

## **SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

### **POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING – 25 APRIL 2019**

Held at the Memorial Hall, South Downs Centre, Midhurst at 10am

Present: Sebastian Anstruther, Ken Bodfish (Chair), Tim Burr, Jo Carr, Janet Duncton, Helen Jackson, Graham Morrison and Russell Oppenheimer

Ex-officio Members: Norman Dingemans

SDNPA Officers: Trevor Beattie (Chief Executive Officer), Andrew Lee (Director of Countryside Policy & Management), Louise Read (Monitoring Officer), Anne Rehill (Performance and Projects Manager), Steven Bedford (Principal Accountant), Alan Brough (Head of Business Services), Robin Parr (Head of Governance) and Catherine Sydenham (Committee Officer).

Also Attended by: Kathleen Downes (Internal Auditor) and Ruth James (Communications and Engagement Manager).

#### **OPENING REMARKS**

210. The Director of Countryside Policy and Management opened the meeting and stated that:
- The meeting was being webcast by the Authority and would be available for subsequent on-line viewing. Anyone entering the meeting was considered to have given consent to be filmed or recorded, and for the possible use of images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purpose
  - SDNPA Members had a primary responsibility for ensuring that the Authority furthers the National Park Purposes and Duty. Members regarded themselves first and foremost as Members of the Authority, and would act in the best interests of the National Park as a whole, rather than as representatives of their appointing body or any interest groups.

#### **ITEM 1: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

211. Apologies were received from Chris Dowling, Mark Dunn, Philip Ede, Tom Fourcade, Daniel Humphreys, Carole Nicholson, Margaret Paren and Pete West.

#### **ITEM 2: ELECTION OF CHAIR**

212. The Director of Countryside Policy and Management informed the Committee that nominations for the position of Chair closed 5 working days before the meeting and as Ken Bodfish was the only nomination, Ken Bodfish was duly elected as Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee until the first meeting after the Authority AGM in 2019.

#### **ITEM 3: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

213. Janet Duncton declared a Public Services Interest in Agenda Item 10 as a Director of Petworth Vision.

#### **ITEM 4: MINUTES OF PREVIOUS POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 28 FEBRUARY 2019**

214. The minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 28 February 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the following amendments:
- Minute 153- The Eastern Area team were now housed within Stanmer Depot and not the Long Barn as stated in the minutes.
  - Minute 196 –change the spelling of ‘wired’ to ‘wide’.
  - Minute 205 – amend the wording of the minute so that it reads ‘*The map suggested that*

*relatively few projects were happening in the central area of the South Downs National Park, but a number were not location-specific and all areas stood to benefit from these’.*

**ITEM 5: MATTERS ARISING**

215. There were none

**ITEM 6: URGENT MATTERS**

216. There were none

**ITEM 7: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

217. There were no public speakers.

**AUDIT**

**ITEM 8: INTERNAL AUDIT – PROGRESS REPORT**

218. The Internal Auditor introduced report PR13/19 and reminded members of the report content.

219. The Committee commented that:

- There was concern that applicants calculate the Gross Internal Area (GIA) metric. The lower the GIA the less Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and it therefore, should not be assumed that the applicant verification of the Gross Internal Area figure was correct.

220. In response to questions Officers clarified that:

- The GIA figure was a key metric for calculating CIL liability but not the only metric of doing so. Future training will be provided to Host Authorities.
- Officers commented that there may be circumstances in which it is appropriate to allow time extensions for payment of CIL and recognised that a consistent approach was needed.
- Officers confirmed that all penalty charges go in to the CIL pot.
- The minor compliance issue within the Code of Conduct related to who authorises the Senior Management Team Declaration of Interests. This issue had now been resolved.

221. Jo Carr joined the meeting.

222. **RESOLVED:** That the committee noted:

1. Progress against the Internal Audit Strategy and Annual Plan (2018/19); and
2. The implementation of audit actions previously agreed by management.

**ITEM 9: INTERNAL AUDIT – STRATEGY AND ANNUAL AUDIT PLAN 2019/20**

223. The Internal Auditor introduced report PR14/19 and reminded members of the report content.

224. The Committee commented that:

- It would assist the committee if previous and future Internal Audit Plans could be reported in addition to the proposed current year’s Internal Audit Plan.
- The previous Governance Committee had a yearly training session on the accounts and Internal Audit and it would be helpful if this could be reconvened.

225. In response to questions officers clarified that:

- Training for Members on Internal Audit was included on the future work programme.

226. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee approved the Internal Audit Strategy and Annual Plan for 2019/20.

## ITEM 10: APPROACH TO PRODUCING THE REVISED PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN

227. Report PR15/19 was introduced by both the Chair of the Partnership Management Plan (PMP), Helen Jackson, and the Performance and Project Manager. Within the introduction it was explained that the revised PMP had to be an ambitious, accessible, bold and clear plan that allowed for flexibility. The Task and Finish Group had worked with Officers to refine the Priority Programmes down from over 100 to 21 and these were categorised into 10 outcomes and 3 areas of work. The most up to date priority programmes were tabled at the meeting.
228. The Committee had a discussion and made the following comments:
- The PMP was not the SDNPA Plan but the plan for the whole of the South Downs National Park. The role of the Authority was to bring people together and be the strategic lead in an enabling and facilitative way.
  - The PMP needed to be clear what it was the Authority was trying to achieve with its partners over the next 5 years.
  - Communities were at the heart at the PMP and were the thread throughout the plan.
  - That they were pleased to note that the Dark Night Skies Policy was been considered by Host Authorities when considering planning applications.
  - Members suggested further potential partners.
  - Words could have different meanings to different people.
229. In response to questions officers and the Chair of the Partnership Management Plan Task and Finish Group clarified that:
- The Plan will be flexible and divided into different sections to tell different stories that were relevant to the audience. It also had to be relevant and relate to current issues.
  - The wording of Priority Programme (1.1) had been changed to '*ensure net gain from any infrastructure projects*' to reflect on the external environment and allow for ambition and drive. The aim of the task and finish group was to seek to strengthen the priority programme and build in ambition but took the point that the wording '*seek to achieve*' might be better than ensure.
  - The PMP must set measurable objectives which were owned and delivered by the Partnership.
  - Highways were addressed within Outcome 5 and at the partner workshop held in March 2019 additional projects were put forward from some of the Highways Authorities.
  - There were 3 plans: The Corporate Plan – which was the Authority's own plan; the Partnership Management Plan – which was the plan for the whole of the SDNP with the SDNPA as the Strategic Lead; and the Local Plan. Cross references would need to be made between all 3 but they were all distinct separate documents.
  - Housing design was covered within the Local Plan and would address poor quality housing design.
  - Gaps in the previous PMP had been examined and addressed. An example of a gap identified and addressed was the creation of a new outcome for Health and Wellbeing.
  - Many projects will contribute to a number of priority programmes but they have to be aligned to one area.
  - An Officer group was looking to build on the 'Roads in the South Downs' document to produce a new document that was for local communities looking at how they could improve their local spaces.
  - The PMP was a working and priority list not a report and will be communicating clear messages on what we could make a positive change on. Communications will not be broadcast style but will take an engagement approach and incorporate the bigger picture into what benefits and concerns local people.

- There will be 3 versions of the final PMP document: A full detailed printed document; a shorter accessible document and an interactive website.

230. The Chair thanked the Committee for a good debate.

231. **RESOLVED: That the Committee:**

1. Endorsed and recommended to the Authority the draft outcomes and priority programmes for inclusion in the Partnership Management Plan.
2. Endorsed the approach to communicating and reporting on the PMP to the Committee, partners and wider public.
3. Noted the approach to restructuring and rewriting parts of the PMP.
4. Delegated authority to the Director of Countryside Policy & Management, in consultation with the Chair of the PMP Task & Finish Group, to make any further changes arising from the Committee's deliberations prior to submission to the Authority.

### **ITEM 11: RISK REGISTER**

232. The Head of Governance introduced report PR16/19 and reminded members of the report content.

233. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee noted the Corporate Risk Register as at April 2019.

### **CHAIR**

The meeting closed at 11:25am