

Report to	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>
Date	<b>26 September 2019</b>
By	<b>Heathlands Reunited Project Manager</b>
Title of Report (Note)	<b>Project Evaluation – Heathlands Reunited Year 3</b>

**Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to: Receive and consider the project overview and external evaluation report for Heathlands Reunited year 3 at Appendix I.**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This report presents one project evaluation for consideration by the Policy and Resources Committee. The Committee is asked to consider the evaluation report and identify any recommendations it may wish to make as a result of the learning points and themes highlighted. This report contains 1 evaluation report.

## **2. Issues for consideration – Heathlands Reunited**

- 2.1 The Heathlands Reunited project started delivery in June 2016. It runs for 5 years until May 2021. The year two external evaluation report was presented to the P&R Committee in November 2018. The total project cost is £2.37 million. Of that £1.44 million has been secured from Heritage Lottery Fund and nearly £1 million in match funding (cash and in-kind) from partners. The SDNPA contribution is a £150,000 cash contribution and wider support provided to the project team from within the authority.
- 2.2 As part of the monitoring and evaluation programme for the project, the year three evaluation is carried out externally by Collingwood Environmental Planning. The detailed year three evaluation report is at **Appendix I**.
- 2.3 The key findings of the evaluation highlight successes plus areas for improvement. Overall, the project is on track with the project manager overseeing progress. The project has a clear governance structure and has established processes for monitoring project activities and works.
- 2.4 Engagement activities have been successful as indications show that events are making stronger connections between communities and heathland. The target number of people engaged at events has been exceeded and feedback indicates improved understanding and learning about Heathlands has been achieved although the number of events held is behind target.
- 2.5 Similarly, all training events received positive comments on feedback forms, however, the number of training sessions held is behind target.
- 2.6 Work with under-represented groups has happened but this will have more of a focus over the next two years.
- 2.7 The number of volunteers hours contributed to the project is currently well below target levels.

- 2.8 Progress on the restoration and creation of heathlands habitat is on target, although there is some concern over the remaining programme of capital works, 1/5th of the planned works have not yet been programmed and are potentially at risk.
- 2.9 The commitment to good partnership working was demonstrated at the evaluation partner Review Session with participants reporting where relationships were working well and leading to improved outcomes.
- 2.10 The focus community group, who were approached as part of the evaluation, demonstrated a strong interest in taking forward the legacy of the project. This is a resource that the project should seek to support and grow in its last two years.
- 2.11 The evaluation report sets out 12 recommendations relating to partnership working, capital works, activity planning, volunteers, community engagement, communication, data monitoring and the project legacy.
- 2.12 The Heathlands Reunited team have noted the recommendations and have incorporated them into the team action plan where all learnings and recommendations that arise from the project are recorded. This action plan details how each recommendation can be addressed and incorporated into future activity.

### 3. Other Implications

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	No
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	No
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	The project evaluated represents either appropriate or good value for money.
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?	There are no equalities implications arising from this report. The equalities implications of projects are considered as part of the project development process. Any issues raised as part of the evaluation will be monitored through the capture of learning points.
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	No
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	No
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	No
Are there any Data Protection implications?	No
Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the SDNPA Sustainability Strategy:	Learning from projects contributes to sustainability principle 2 ensuring a strong healthy and just society – considering social cohesion and wellbeing; principle 3 achieving a sustainable economy – considering impacts on or contribution to a sustainable economy; and principle 4 Promoting good governance – considering how to encourage active participation.

#### 4. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
That learning from projects is not fully captured	2	2	Well understood mechanisms are in place to capture information about the progress of projects and identifying learning through evaluation.  Evaluation reports and case studies are routinely produced.
Learning from projects is not fed into future project development	3	2	A mechanism for improvement planning is in place.  Project specific learning is followed up by themed programme boards which meet several times a year. Corporate learning is captured and disseminated via an organisational improvement plan and in any revisions to guidance that might be deemed appropriate.

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**South Downs National Park Authority**

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Appendices I. Evaluation report for year three of Heathlands Reunited (Stand Alone Document)

SDNPA Consultees Chief Executive; Director of Countryside Policy and Management; Director of Planning; Chief Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer; Legal Services, Business Service Manager; Countryside and Policy Managers

External Consultees None

Background Documents [Year 1 evaluation](#)

[Year 2 evaluation](#)

[Appendix 1](#)

[Appendix 2](#)

[Project Approval](#)

