



South Downs

National Park Authority

Agenda Item 10

Report NPA19/20-21

Report to	South Downs National Park Authority
Date	19 December 2019
By	Performance and Projects Manager
Title of Report Decision	Approval of Revised Partnership Management Plan

Recommendation: The Authority is recommended to:

- 1. Note the responses to the statutory notifications under section 66 (7) of the Environment Act 1995 (The Act), and the wider distribution of the draft amended Partnership Management Plan to the Parish Councils with land within the National Park**
- 2. Agree, pursuant to section 66(6)(a) of the Act, that it is expedient to amend the Partnership Management Plan and that, taking into account the responses received, the proposed amendments are appropriate**
- 3. Agree to amend the content of the Partnership Management Plan as set out in Appendix 1**
- 4. Agree the content of the Report on the Review specifying the amendments made as set out in Appendix 2, to be published alongside the amended Partnership Management Plan**
- 5. Delegate authority to the Director of Countryside Policy and Management in consultation with the Chair of the Authority to approve the final design of the amended Partnership Management Plan and publish it together with the Report on the Review, sending a copy of each to the Secretary of State.**

1. Introduction

- 1.1** The purpose of the report is to request that the Authority approve the final content of the amended Partnership Management Plan (PMP) and the proposed process and next steps for publication.

2. Policy Context.

- 2.1** National Park Authorities are required by The Act, to produce a Management Plan and to keep it under review at least every 5 years. Where a National Park Authority reviews its partnership management plan, the Act requires it to determine on that review whether it would be expedient to amend the plan and what (if any) amendments would be appropriate if any amendments should be made, to make them such amendments and then to publish a report on the review specifying any amendments made.
- 2.2** The first South Downs Partnership Management Plan (PMP) was launched in 2014. It took as its starting point the Purposes & Duty and the Vision and Special Qualities which had been

developed as part of the State of the Park Report 2012. The two documents were based on over two years of very extensive engagement with the general public, communities, businesses, landowners and environmental organisations. The original PMP took a long-term approach (with Outcomes for 2050) but included a five-year Delivery Plan which set out projects from a wide range of stakeholders. Its development was overseen by the SDNPA but with strategic advice from the South Downs Partnership.

3. Development of the draft amended Plan

- 3.1 The start of the review process was in January 2017, when the initial approach was set out and a joint meeting of SDNPA members and the South Downs Partnership agreed how the process should be undertaken. Partner engagement in the development of the Outcomes, Priorities and committed projects has taken the form of:
- 5 joint workshops between Members and the South Downs Partnership to develop the Outcomes and Priorities.
 - Strategy Leads, liaising with sector groups in the development of their priorities and talking in detail to partners about potential projects, engaged with well over 200 stakeholders across different sectors such as biodiversity, access and education, to develop the content of the PMP.
 - Workshops with parish and town councils to raise awareness of the review and to gain ideas from communities about what they could contribute to the PMP.
- 3.2 A Member Task and Finish Group, reporting to the P&R Committee, was set up in February 2018 to scrutinise and support the more detailed development of the outcomes and priorities. It met on 13 occasions and completed its work in July 2019. As the PMP review progressed it became apparent that an extensive rewrite would be necessary, not least because of the extensive changes in the external environment since 2014.
- 3.3 The P&R Committee has supported the review of the PMP throughout, and received four reports in addition to receiving updates, approving outcomes and priorities and agreeing the approach to monitoring and reporting for recommendation to the NPA. In May 2019 the NPA agreed the new framework of outcomes and priorities (for the purposes of formulating the proposed amendments to the PMP prior to notification pursuant to s66 (7) of the Act), the proposed approach to reporting and the communication plan.
- 3.4 In October 2019 the NPA received the content of the draft amended Partnership Management Plan, and agreed for this to be sent to principal councils, within or partly within the National Park boundary, and Natural England. This notification period ended on the 29th November. Three responses were received from two principal councils and Natural England. However, the Authority also chose to distribute the document more widely to the Parish Councils with land within the National Park, and two responses have been received.
- 3.5 Chichester District Council responded positively to the changes noting the introduction of 5 key issues. The Council noted the changes to outcomes including the introduction of a new outcome relating to Wellbeing. The Council also noted the policies, saying that, *'We have no particular comments or concerns to raise and note that they are broadly similar to those which we are familiar with, working with the current Plan'*. Their final comment was that, *'In summary therefore, the Council broadly supports the aims and objectives of the revised Management Plan in addressing the key issues affecting the Park that have been identified'*.
- 3.6 The second principal council to comment on the revised PMP, was West Sussex County Council. The Council sent a more detailed response with some specific suggestions for changes to the text of the revised PMP. The substantive changes we have accepted have been incorporated and are underlined in the text in **Appendix 1**. They are also set out in more detail in the report on proposed changes in **Appendix 2**, along with SDNPA's responses to those suggestions we are choosing not to take on board. These were comments around the inclusion of topics rather than suggested wording. Officers felt that these topics are dealt with effectively in other ways and do not need to be incorporated into

the revised text of the PMP. Natural England noted the amendments made to the PMP but made no suggestions for changes.

- 3.7 Responses were also received from Lavant Parish Council and Midhurst Town Council. Lavant Council was positive about the PMP, describing it as an ‘...*excellent bold and visionary document, which we are very happy to support*’. They noted and supported the commitment to the 50% affordable housing requirement in the National Park. Midhurst Town Council were not as positive. Despite stating that the Council ‘...*generally supports the draft Partnership Management Plan*’, they expressed strong concern about what they perceive to be the lack of attention to employment that is not forestry or farming related. Their comments seem to relate mostly to the role of the SDNPA as Planning Authority. The Director of Countryside Policy and Management has arranged for a response to the issues raised by the Town Council to be put together and communicated to them. No changes will be made to the text of the revised PMP as a result of either of the representations from these parish and Town Councils, as there is no requirement for us to do so.
- 3.8 The original PMP had eleven 2050 Outcomes. In the revised plan, two of the previous outcomes have been combined and, importantly, a new outcome added relating to Health and Well-being. Below these, 21 priorities for the next five years have been identified and these provide the connection between the long term outcomes and the projects of the contributing partners (including the SDNPA). The text of the PMP has been restructured and substantially revised to reflect these changes.
- 3.9 Sustainability and equalities assessments have been carried out. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was carried out in July 2019. The feedback from this has been taken into account in the proposed text. The full documents were attached to the paper to the NPA in October. A subsequent final SEA has indicated that there are now no mitigating actions required, which means we have successfully incorporated all of the mitigating actions previously identified. Members are asked to approve the amended content for the PMP at **Appendix I**.
- 3.10 The Authority is required by Section 66 (6) (c) of the Act to publish a report on the review, specifying the amendments made. The proposed report is at **Appendix 2** for consideration and approval by the Authority. Given the magnitude of the revisions, it is not considered practical or helpful to itemise every one of the amendments made to the PMP. The report itemises the changes to outcomes, policies and the addition of priorities and new indicators, rather than identifying every textual amendment or change to graphics. The report on the review will be published with the amended Partnership Management Plan.
- 3.11 Regular monitoring of progress on delivery of confirmed projects and trends in key indicators will be carried out and shared annually. Where the SDNPA is entirely responsible for delivery of an indicator it may be possible to set quantitative targets, but this will not be the case for the majority of the indicators in the PMP.
- 3.12 Members are asked to delegate authority to the Director of Countryside Policy and Management, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority to approve the final design of the Partnership Management Plan and publish it, together with the report on the review, which will be published on our website along with the revised plan.
- 4. Communication approach**
- 4.1 A specific approach to communicating the PMP, including target audiences, key messages and what mechanisms will be used, was developed alongside the review process. This will be summarised in a presentation to the NPA meeting.
- 4.2 A Communications Plan has been developed and approved which sets out the key messages, target audiences, and what mechanisms will be used to make people aware of and engaged with the PMP. This will include:
- Full printed report.
 - An “At a glance” booklet in plain English explaining key outcomes and priorities.

- New website will be launched where the 10 Outcomes and how we are doing against them will be central. The website will also give access to more detail via outcomes and priorities. It will also include background information, evidence, the full project lists and FAQs.
- An awareness raising and public engagement campaign called 'Your South Downs' will run alongside the revised PMP highlighting different aspects of the plan monthly.
- Media releases will be used to raise awareness of the plan once it is due to be published online and in hard copy.
- Bespoke information will be offered to Parishes for their newsletters and magazines. The e-newsletter will also be used.
- Extensive use of social media to publicise the launch and press releases, case studies and reporting will also be publicised using social media.

5. Options & cost implications

- 5.1 Resources to review the plan have to date comprised mainly staff time. There were some direct costs, totalling £4,295 associated with the engagement of a consultancy firm to help manage a large workshop with partners in September 2018 and £7,000 for the completion of the Sustainability Assessment.
- 5.2 It is anticipated that the cost of printing the revised PMP document and the 'At a Glance' document will be approximately £11,708.

6. Other Implications

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	No
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	Delivery of the PMP will have significant resource implication and these are picked up during the budgeting process for the SDNPA itself. Similarly Partners will have their own budget making processes for their projects. The cost for printing the PMP and the at a glance booklet is approximately £11,708
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	N/A
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- Equalities assessments for the Outcomes in the PMP were carried out and reported to the October meeting of the NPA.
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	No
Are there any Crime &	None

Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	None
Are there any Data Protection implications?	None
Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the SDNPA Sustainability Strategy?	A sustainability assessment was undertaken as part of the process. It will be published along with the report setting out changes made to the Partnership Management Plan on the SDNPA website, when the amended plan is launched.

7. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Plan does not deliver agreed priorities	2	2	Keeping the plan under review and monitoring delivery regularly will identify any issues with delivery of priorities. Changes in technology and or drivers in the external environment will be kept under review and used to address concerns over delivery of priorities
Lack of capacity to deliver elements of the plan	3	3	Keeping the plan under review and monitoring delivery regularly will identify any issues with capacity The SDNPA will work collaboratively with partners to identify and issues and address them as appropriate.

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Appendices 1. PMP draft text

2. Report on amendments

SDNPA Consultees Chief Executive; Director of Countryside Policy and Management; Director of Planning; Chief Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer; Legal Services; Strategy Leads.

External Consultees None

Background Documents [Report to NPA October 2019](#)

[Appendix 1](#)

[Appendix 2](#)

[Appendix 3](#)

[Appendix 4](#)

[Appendix 5](#)

