

Agenda Item 11
Report PR20/21-41

Report to	Policy & Resources Committee
Date	29 April 2021
By	Landscape & Biodiversity Strategy Lead (Chalk).
Title of Report (Note)	Truleigh Hill Landscape Project – ‘End of Project’ Review.

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

- 1) Receive and consider the end-of project evaluation report for the Truleigh Hill landscape project.**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report presents the end-of project evaluation for consideration by the Policy and Resources Committee.
- 1.2 The evaluation report seeks to capture experience and learning that has accrued through the delivery of the project. It contains a full summary of the achievements of the project, and how the SDNPA can build upon this as a legacy. The evaluation report also highlights where there were unexpected issues or external factors that impacted upon the delivery of the project.
- 1.3 The Truleigh Hill Landscape Project commenced mid-2018, with delivery in line with the Project PID.
- 1.4 The project represented a new way of working for the SDNPA, with the designated Community Landscape Project Officer working across a focussed project area. Truleigh Hill was highlighted as a priority landscape within the SDNPA Green Infrastructure Framework. This document was recently re-launched as the ‘People & Nature Network’ (PANN).
- 1.5 The project focused activity on a small geographical area, and sought to deliver on a number of themed areas through the co-ordinating role of the project officer. This included dealing with both issues and opportunities relating to:
- Access and Infrastructure
 - Enforcement and Antisocial Behaviour
 - Volunteering, Learning, Education and Community
 - Leisure, Recreation, Health and Wellbeing
 - Heritage and Culture
 - Habitats, Biodiversity and Landscape Character
- 1.6 It was also establishing and testing a new way of providing support by the SDNPA Area Team. The role was very much about convening and pulling together the full range of PMP outcomes in one focussed area.
- 1.7 A key element of the project was to involve the local community and local stakeholders in the decision making process. This was to create a shared vision for Truleigh Hill, which would achieve landscape improvements in this part of the national park.
- 1.8 The project employed a number of different mechanisms to achieve this, including

consultation with a wide range of local community groups and stakeholders through:

- Formal public consultation events.
- Talks and presentations to community audiences and local interest groups.
- Face to face meetings with local residents and key stakeholders.
- Targeted engagement with schools, community groups and underrepresented audiences.
- Online surveys to capture public opinion.

2. Policy Context

2.1 The Truleigh Hill Landscape Project sought to address a number of the Outcomes and Priorities from the SDNPA PMP 2020-25.

2.2 The outcomes are listed below:

- Purpose 1: 'Enhance': Outcome 1.1 and 1.2 – Outcome 2.1, and 2.2 – Outcome 3.1 and Outcome 4.1 and 4.2
- Purpose 2: 'Experience': Outcome 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 – Outcome 6.1 – Outcome 7.1 – Outcome 8.1
- SDNPA Duty: 'Thrive': Outcome 9.2 – Outcome 10.1, 10.2 and 10.3

2.3 The project also worked to complement the following SDNPA strategies:

- Cycling and Walking Strategy 2017 – 2024
- Learning Outreach Strategic Review 2018 – 2023
- Sustainable Tourism Strategy 2015 – 2020
- Volunteer Development Strategy 2018 - 2023

2.4 The project also complements the focal areas and proposals identified within the [2019 DEFRA Landscape Review](#).

- Landscapes Alive for Nature and Beauty: Proposals 1, 2 and 3.
- Landscapes for Everyone: Proposals 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 14.
- Living Landscapes: Proposals 17 and 19
- New Ways of Working: Proposal 25

3. Issues for consideration

3.1 It is requested that the P&R committee review the attached *End-of Project Evaluation Report* (Appendix '1'). This sets out the achievements and legacy from the Project, which ended in October 2020. The evaluation report considers next steps of the project, in terms of mainstreaming some of its activities and considering options for further project work.

3.2 Due to an unforeseen period of sickness for the Project Officer during August/September 2019, there was some slippage to the project timeline. As a result, the project was granted a short 3 month extension. This was to maximise on the project opportunities and deliver on elements of the Action Plan that had been delayed.

3.3 The impact of the Covid-19 Public Health Crisis was also significant. This stopped or limited the ability to convene groups or to run volunteer tasks and activities. Ideally the project could have been sustained to have picked this up beyond the period of lockdown, but it was not possible to extend the project for a further period of several months.

3.4 In addition the following observations have been made:

- a) Truleigh Hill, has a complex range of issues and opportunities was well suited to a Community engagement approach, which is a key skill and takes time to do properly.
- b) It was useful to have the focus of a dedicated project officer in respect of this project, and for this to supplement the work of the Area Team. This sort of deep, and focussed, landscape-based project work is a vital component of our delivery.
- c) The engagement and outreach element of the work, and the trialling of Health & Well Being projects, were very successful. These outputs have been very helpful in terms of shaping our approach and strategy for the SDNPA as a whole.

- d) It is often difficult to retain the experience accrued through the project within the Authority. However, the approach remains a good delivery model – and one we are now using for the Ouse Valley CARES project.
- e) The project was originally conceived as a longer-term project (5 Years) but was managed down to a budget. In retrospect, this was a mistake as the additional time was definitely required.
- f) With the impact of COVID-19 on the work programmes of the SDNPA, and this project in particular, a longer extension of time would have been ideal.
- g) The focus of the project on engagement and outreach for the coastal plain communities and difficult to reach audiences was good groundwork for a post-COVID situation, where access and opportunities for outdoor recreation were opening up again.
- h) The project had some success in attracting small pots of external funding, but did not manage to pull together a larger funding bid. This was in spite of exploring different funding options during the course of the project.
- i) The site has a complex Planning history, and this proved to be one area of the project that was difficult to reconcile.
- j) Internal communications for the project could have been improved. It is often difficult for individual projects to get their message across internally.
- k) Many positives that have come out of the Truleigh project and the allocation of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) S106 funds from Rampion, not least our own learning and development in relation to these large scale projects. The development and experience from this project allowed us to review the process for spending of future NSIP funds in order to demonstrate that we were able to improve processes in order to minimise the risk to the SDNPA in relation to spending S106 funds.

4. Next steps

- 4.1 The Project Steering Group remains in place and will make the appropriate recommendations to the committee around project legacy and potential for any future external funding bids.
- 4.2 The delays outlined above have left a number of outstanding items in the area Action Plan. With the assistance of the Eastern Area Team we have developed a proposal to work with the Friends of Truleigh Hill Group to deliver on these habitat and landscape improvements once we are out of current restrictions.

5. Other Implications

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	No – This is the end-of project Evaluation.
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	The question of project legacy is addressed in detail within the evaluation report. It was always an objective for the project to achieve sustainable outcomes and ongoing engagement beyond the initial two-year lifespan of the project. There are a number of areas where the project has informed the development of new programmes of work – not least in terms of Education and Outreach and Health & Well-being.
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	The project had a limited timescale. The focus of having a dedicated Project Officer meant it achieved a lot in terms of engagement with stakeholder groups and delivering on the objectives of the Project. In addition, we explored opportunities for leveraging in external funding to support the sustainability of the project beyond the initial two-year period.

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. As a part of its educational and community engagement activity, the project presented opportunities to engage with under-represented groups and audiences as participants and beneficiaries of the project. The project also specifically targeted vulnerable groups including the elderly and those at risk of loneliness and isolation, people with learning disabilities, adults with mental health support needs and those referred through local social prescribing networks, as well as vulnerable and marginalised youth.
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	No.
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	Yes. The project sought to deal with issues of antisocial behaviour and environmental and other crime occurring at the project location. The Project Officer worked closely with the Wildlife and Heritage Crime Officer in Sussex, the Youth Safety and Intervention Team and the Rural PCSO from the Prevention Team in Sussex. The project tried to develop a co-ordinated approach with the aim of reducing crime and antisocial behaviour.
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:	Yes. A key objective of the project was to provide equality of opportunity at Truleigh Hill. This meets the principle of Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society and addressing any barriers that might have a limiting impact on participation within the South Downs National Park.

6. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Full scope of Landscape Plan and Action Plan improvements not achieved due to project slippage and the impacts of the Covid-19 Epidemic on the delivery of the project	3	3	A short project extension was granted – but it will be necessary for the Project Steering Group to remain active to deliver on outstanding actions and ensure the project legacy is fully realised.
Lack of continued community engagement beyond project end point.	3	4	Continue to engage with the local community through the 'Friends of' Group. Explore match funding external partners to continue delivery following project completion.
Full impact of project not captured/realised.	2	4	Ensure the project evaluation is comprehensive, and identifies and delivers fully on the legacy of the project. Makes sure the lessons learned from the project are properly

			disseminated and applied across the SDNPA.
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Appendices I. Project Review

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

External Consultees None

Background Documents [original Project Implementation Document \(PID\) – available on request](#)
[Map of the core Project Area – available on request](#)
[Mid-Point Evaluation Report to P&R Committee – November 2019](#)

End of Project Review

Project Overview

PROJECT TITLE:	Truleigh Hill Landscape project
PROJECT LEAD (AUTHOR):	Chris Fairbrother, Landscape & Biodiversity Strategy Lead
PROJECT START DATE:	July 2018
PROJECT END DATE:	October 2020

Executive summary

The project was initiated in 2018, as a pilot to test a stakeholder-led approach to improving the landscape character of Truleigh Hill and its surroundings. The site is a hotspot for recreational activities and situated on the urban fringe of Brighton, Shoreham and the coastal plain adjoining this part of the National Park. It is also a focal point with many residents and visitors using the South Downs Way (SDW) and with an established Youth Hostel attracting between 6,000-10,000 day visits and around 5000 overnight stays. This is in addition to the surrounding public rights of way network.

Truleigh Hill was also identified as a focal area within the South Downs Green Infrastructure Framework (recently launched as the South Downs People & Nature Network). The project intended to work with the wide range of local stakeholders, and learn how a landscape scale approach could be best delivered. These lessons learned could then be applied across the wider National Park area. This was to compliment the work of the Area Ranger Team and bolster their capacity to deliver on a landscape scale project based on an important local site.

At the outset of the project two broad objectives were proposed:

- Address the fragmentation of the landscape by developing and delivering interventions through a landscape-led approach, re-establish it as an area with a continuous and unifying landscape character.

- Engage with a wide range of stakeholders, (local residents, landowners & farmers, local & national businesses, YHA, users of the SDW & PROW network, surrounding populations in the settlements on the edges of the SDNP. Re-tell the story of the site and its part in the landscape history of the South Downs.

The proposal is for a landscape-based project with a dedicated project officer who could work with a wide range of local stakeholder groups. This engagement was to be used to develop a programme of works for the area based on a Landscape Assessment and Action Plan. The project officer was to be responsible for developing and delivering a range of practical projects. This would include habitat restoration, site interpretation, new hedgerow, screening, and helping to resolve issues around anti-social behaviour and landscape detractors. They would also work with colleagues within the SDNPA to help prepare of planning guidance and deliver best the options for mitigation of the landscape impacts of planning and development.

Another important aspect of the project would be to link with surrounding schools and colleges so the potential of the site to educate and engage with young people in the surrounding settlements. There was also potential for the project to trial further approaches around education and outreach for excluded or disadvantaged groups. With the recent development of the SDNPAs programme around promoting greater opportunities for health and well-being the site and the project offered a useful test bed for ideas and pilot actions.

Originally conceived as a 5-year project, the decision was taken to establish the project for an initial 2 years. The focus on developing external funding bids that could make the project sustainable beyond that point, with the mainstreaming of work with the SDNPA where the opportunities existed.

Summary of main conclusions and lessons learned through the project

- Community engagement is a key skill and takes time to do properly. Sites like Truleigh Hill, with a complex range of issues and opportunities was well suited to this approach.
- It was useful to have the focus of a dedicated project officer for sites like this, and to supplement the work of the Area Team. This sort of deep, and focussed, landscape-based project work is a vital component of our delivery.

- The engagement and outreach element of the work, and the trialling of Health & Well Being projects, were a very successful. These outputs have been very helpful in terms of shaping our approach and strategy for the SDNPA as a whole.
- It is often difficult to retain the experience accrued through the project within the Authority. However, it remains a good delivery model – and one we are now using for the Ouse Valley CARES project.
- The project was originally conceived as a longer-term project (5 Years) but was managed down to a budget. In retrospect, this was a mistake as the additional time was definitely required.
- With the impact of COVID-19 on the work programmes of the SDNPA, and this project in particular, a longer extension would have been ideal.
- The focus of the project on engagement and outreach for the coastal plain communities and difficult to reach audiences was good groundwork for a post-COVID situation, where access and opportunities for outdoor recreation were opening up again.
- The project had some success in attracting small pots of external funding, but did not manage to pull together a larger funding bid. This was in spite of exploring different funding options during the course of the project.
- The site has a complex Planning history, and this proved to be one area of the project that was difficult to reconcile.
- Internal communications for the project could have been improved. It is often difficult for individual projects to get their message across internally.
- Many positives that have come out of the Truleigh project and the allocation of NSIP S106 funds from Rampion, not least our own learning and development in relation to these large scale project.
- The development and experience from this project allowed us to review the process for spending of future NSIP funds in order to ensure to demonstrate that we were able to improve processes in order to minimise the risk to the SDNPA in relation to spending S106 funds.

Analysis of project

PROJECT DURATION:	The project was expected to run for two years – from July 2018 through until July 2020. Overall, the project kept to time until Quarter 2 (2019). Time was lost due to the Project Officer being off due to poor health. The Steering
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	<p>Group took the decision to extend the project for a further 3 Months to mitigate this impact. The project was extended until October 2020.</p> <p>The final phase of the project were impacted by the COVID-19 National Health Crisis. The implementation of a national lockdown and social distancing measures has serious consequences for the project. Post 23rd March 2020 all practical/on site activity halted until further notice.</p>
<p>PROJECT CONTROL & GOVERNANCE:</p>	<p>A project steering group was set up at the start of the project. This comprised of Phil Paulo (Project Officer), Claire Kerr (CPM Lead), Chris Fairbrother (Line Manager – Project Lead), Roni Craddock (Green Infrastructure Lead), Phillippa Morrison-Price (Lead Ranger – Eastern Area Team), Ruth James (Communications Manager), Liz Gent (Project Management Officer)</p> <p>In addition, the project reported Quarterly as part of the Corporate Plan reporting process. The project also made a mid-point review and project update to P&R Committee.</p> <p>The project pre-dated the establishment of the Theme Delivery Boards (TBD) – but once established the Project Officer was co-opted onto the Landscape & Biodiversity TBD. There was a regular project update as part of the agenda. Amanda Elmes (Strategy Lead – Education and Outreach) joined the steering group at the latter stages of the project.</p> <p>Overall, there were appropriate levels of project control and governance in place for a project of this size. A significant component of the project required close working with the Planning Directorate. Communications between the Project Officer and the wider SDNPA were good overall – but given the importance of the link with Planning, it would have been desirable to secure involvement of a Planning Representative on the steering group.</p>
<p>PARTNERS:</p>	<p>The project had an original target of engagement with 15 stakeholder/community based groups. This was exceeded in the initial year. Over the course of the project, the following groups were actively involved through the engagement process or through direct contact with the Project Officer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local residents at Truleigh Hill; • Residents from the surrounding urban communities; • Landowners including National Trust, the local farming community, and local authorities; • Parish, district and county council representatives. (Upper Beeding, Horsham, West Sussex) • Utility Companies (Southern Water, UK Power Networks and British Gas)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telecommunications Companies (Arqiva, AP Wireless, BT) • The Youth Hostel Association • Cycling groups (Sustrans) • Walking groups (Sussex Ramblers, Friends of the South Downs) • Natural History/Environmental Groups (Sussex Wildlife Trust, TCV, Froglife, RSPB, Greentides) • Heritage Groups (Steyning Museum, Local History Society, RBL and Air Cadets) • Local businesses (Truleigh Hill Stables, Golding Barn Raceway, Community Transport) • Schools and Colleges (Upper Beeding, Shoreham College) • Youth organisations (Esteem, Sussex clubs for young people, uniform groups) • Local Social Prescribing Network (Going Local and South downs) • Site base volunteers and members of the VRS. (volunteer ranger service)
<p>LEGACY & SUSTAINABILITY:</p>	<p>A number of work strands have developed as part of the legacy of the project. These were broadly as planned for the project, though the continued impact of the Covid-19 epidemic has delayed or left some areas hanging.</p> <p>This is especially the case with the volunteering elements of the legacy. A plan is now in place to support volunteering activity for the future with a link to area team and in accordance with our current volunteering policies.</p> <p><u>Links with the YHA</u></p> <p>The YHA refurbishment is still on hold for the near future. There will be a need to reassess the situation following COVID-19 and in reaction to any revisions to their national strategy.</p> <p><u>Education and outreach – YHA collaboration and ‘Generation Green’</u></p> <p>Truleigh Hill will be the focus of education sessions as part of the delivery of the ‘Generation Green’ project during 2021-2022. The project, part of a first phase of delivery by a consortium of partners, is being funded through the Green Recovery Fund. The aim of the project is to connect young people with outdoor learning at key sites across the SDNP.</p>

	<p><u>'Friends of and volunteer activity</u></p> <p>A 'Friends of Truleigh Hill' group has been in the early stages of establishment, with the group being formally constituted in 2020. A number of Virtual meetings are planned to keep the momentum of this group going while social distancing measures are still in place.</p> <p>With the assistance of the Eastern Area Team, we have developed a proposal to work with the Friends of Truleigh Hill Group to deliver on the habitat and landscape improvements once we are out of current restrictions. Dedicated support will be provided through Ranger Team as part of an ongoing programme of work.</p> <p><u>Health & Well-Being (HWB) programme</u></p> <p>As part of the developing HWB programme, Truleigh Hill will become one three 'hubs' across the National Park. This is now a part of the current version of the Corporate Plan. In terms of experience developed from the pilot project, from a delivery perspective the site is perfect to support communities in and around Shoreham. It presents a great opportunity to support some of those less active and engaged communities to access the National Park.</p>
<p>RISK:</p>	<p>The risk register for the project was comprehensive, and for the most part, it was successful in identifying and mitigating the risks around the project.</p> <p>I:\Landscape_Scale_Projects\Rampion_Project\MITIGATION\Proposed_Schemes\Truleigh Hill Landscape project\007_PSD Truleigh Hill Landscape Project Risk register v2.xlsx</p> <p>What could not have been foreseen was the impact that an extended period of sick leave would have in the project.</p> <p>The impact of the Covid-19 health crisis was unforeseen and had a significant effect on the latter stages of the project. This was especially the case with practical and volunteer based tasks, which were effected by restrictions. The result of this on different elements of the project are considered in detail in this review.</p>
<p>COMMUNICATION:</p>	<p>Info' to follow from Comms Team</p>
<p>MONITORING & EVALUATION</p>	<p>The monitoring and evaluation plan for the project worked well, and was proportionate to the scale of project. As part of the project evaluation, a number of case studies were developed around key areas of project activity. The links to these case studies are presented below:-</p>

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Project results

Project Timeline

In summary, the planned timeline for the project was:-

- Review landscape evidence base - Sept./Oct 2018
- Procure relevant surveys - Oct. 2018
- Initiate stakeholder engagement - Jan 2019
- Plan and hold community events to raise awareness and garner feedback to shape landscape plan - March/April 2019
- Collate feedback from all stakeholders - August 2019
- Identify quick wins for landscape and habitat improvements based on evidence and feedback - Oct 2019.
- Produce a Landscape Management Plan and Action Plan to include 'Quick Wins' and long term options, with costings - Feb 2020

Progress against the original project outcomes and outputs

Stakeholder Groups Engaged (Planned Target - 15 groups)

The project exceeded this target early in year one and continued to increase. The groups involved during the course of the project included:-

- Local residents
- Residents from the surrounding urban communities
- Landowners including National Trust, farming community, county council and local residents.
- Parish, district and county council representatives. (Upper Beeding, Horsham, West Sussex)
- Utility Companies (Southern Water, UK Power Networks and British Gas)
- Telecommunications Companies (Arqiva, AP Wireless, BT)
- Youth Hostel Association
- Cycling organisations (Sustrans)
- Walking organisations (Sussex Ramblers, Friends of the South Downs)
- Natural History/Environmental Groups (Sussex Wildlife Trust, TCV, Froglife, RSPB, Greentides)
- Heritage Groups (Steyning Museum, Local History Society, RBL and Air Cadets)
- Local businesses (Truleigh Hill Stables, Golding Barn Raceway, Community Transport)
- Schools and Colleges (Upper Beeding, Shoreham College)
- Youth organisations (Esteem, Sussex clubs for young people, uniform groups)
- Local Social Prescribing Network (Going Local and South downs)
- Site base volunteers and members of the VRS. (volunteer ranger service)

Events delivered at Truleigh Hill (Planned Target - 3 events)

The first community event was held on the 3rd March 2018. This was a consultation event with family activities on offer. The event was attended by between 70 and 80 people and was used to publicise the project and gather community opinion.

There were also a number of smaller consultation events delivered during year on. This included meetings with the Parish Council and Local History Societies.

The second community event was planned for early May 2020, when YHA Truleigh Hill was due to reopens following refurbishment. This last event planned was to be an end of project celebration between August/September 2020. This was to link with the 10th Anniversary of the South Downs National Park and the 90th Anniversary of the YHA.

As a result of the COVID-19 health crisis, all planned community events were suspended until further notice. The event was cancelled, in line with government guidance. Ideally, the project could have been sustained to pick this up after lockdown. It was not possible to extend the project post for a further period of several months.

Number of volunteer days delivered (Planned Target - 30 days)

A total of 17 practical volunteer sessions were delivered, with a total of 605 volunteer hours being contributed to the project. An additional 14 volunteer tasks were scheduled between January and March 2020. This would have exceeded the original project target. The shutdown of volunteering activity across the National Park from March 2020 meant that the number of volunteer days run through the project were short of the intended target.

Even with the project extension being granted, it was not possible to reconvene practical volunteering tasks during the remainder of 2020. There remains a plan to develop and support a regular VRS group specifically for Truleigh Hill. The project has done significant groundwork to establish this group by engaging youth and adult volunteers and making contact with local social prescribing and health support services.

Landscape Management Plan Produced (Planned Target - 1 Community developed LMP)

A Landscape Assessment and Project Action Plan were completed. This was submitted to P&R committee November 2019. A link to the Landscape Management Plan and the supporting Landscape Assessment are included below.

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The landscape consultants Terra Firma were commissioned to complete a Landscape Assessment. This work was completed in August 2019.

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Land brought into positive management (Planned Target - 10 land parcels)

10+ areas of land were identified within the Draft Action Plan, with a total of 36 planned improvements and interventions. This presented a shortlist of potential projects slightly exceeded the allocated project budget by over £55,000.00. The Project Steering Group to select appropriate works for delivery in year two of the project.

Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, a significant amount of new native hedge planting was carried out at selected locations. This was for both screening and habitat creation. A large proportion of the target areas were successfully planted and some additional hedging stock was earmarked for further planting during Autumn/Winter of 2020/21.

This had to be reviewed as a result to the impact of the Health Crisis. There remain a number of outstanding items in the Action Plan. With the assistance of the Eastern Area Team, we have developed a proposal to deliver on these habitat and landscape improvements once we are out of current restrictions.

Planning Guidance Produced (Planned Target - 1 guidance document)

This outcome was delivered early 2020, in collaboration with the SDNPA Planning team and Landscape Officer. The SDNPA Landscape Officer has recently release guidance for host planning authorities, promoting the Landscape Led Approach to Planning within the National Park. It will be appropriate to use this new resource to develop planning guidance for Truleigh Hill and deliver training to local residents and landowners during year two of the project.

Telecommunications equipment (Planned Target – Removal or consolidation of landscape detractor)

Consultation with Arqiva, the company who oversee the largest of the telecommunications masts on the site, was conducted in year one of the project. Due to the cost of replacement and the residual value of this infrastructure, this target proved to be unachievable during the course of the project. However, the company were happy to consider consolidation of the equipment in the future, once the existing mast reach the end of their lifespan and require replacements. It is recommended that a dialogue be continued with these stakeholders, with opportunities for consolidation to be explored in the future.

Additional engagement targeted engagement events

The project has delivered an additional 6 engagement events at Truleigh Hill. These specifically targeted under-represented audience groups, including:

- Primary school children undertaking curriculum linked opportunities.
- Secondary school children undertaking health and wellbeing focused outdoor activities.
- Local elderly people at risk of isolation and loneliness in partnership with the *Independent Lives* service.
- Young people with learning disabilities in partnership with the *MENCAP Buddy's Friendship Group*.

Very positive outcome was achieved with local youth group Esteem. This group supports vulnerable young people from the local area. They were initially involved with the project through a number of site based educational activities in early 2019. The group has gone on to conduct independent visits to site and are making full use of the facilities at the YHA.

In total, an additional 188 people were actively engaged in activities at Truleigh Hill through these extra outreach activities.

The 'Bike it Wild' project

Blatchington Mill School were involved in a collaborative project between SDNPA, Sustrans and Sussex Wildlife Trust. This included organising a 'Bike Camp' at the site for participating school groups. This proved a very successful pilot project and a short promotional film was commissioned.

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Lessons learned & Next steps

A number of work strands are being progressed as part of the legacy of the project. These were broadly as planned, though the continued impact of the Covid-19 epidemic has delayed or left some areas hanging. This is especially the case with the volunteering elements of the legacy. A plan is now in place to support volunteering activity for the future with a link to area team and in accordance with our current volunteering policies.

'Friends of' group and continuation of volunteer activity

A 'Friends of Truleigh Hill' group has been in the early stages of establishment, with the group formally constituted in 2020. A number of Virtual meetings are planned, to keep momentum going while social distancing measures are still in place.

The group are keen to remain involved with the delivery of the Action Plan. The legacy plan is to maintain contact with the Friends Group, and support them to stay connected with the area team, and other volunteering organisations across the SDNP. We will be able to offer support them to access training and other opportunities via the SDNP Volunteering Network.

Over the last stages of the project, a core group of volunteers were established who wish to remain actively engaged with projects at Truleigh Hill. There has been significant interest from existing volunteers who would like to see regular volunteering opportunities available to them at Truleigh Hill. There is potential to develop an independent volunteer group for Truleigh Hill.

With the assistance of the Eastern Area Team, we have developed a proposal to work with the Friends of Truleigh Hill Group. The Ranger Team will provide support as part of an ongoing programme of work to deliver on these habitat and landscape improvements once we are out of current restrictions.

Education and outreach – YHA collaboration and 'Generation Green'

The YHA refurbishment is still on hold and there will be a need to reassess the situation following COVID-19 and in reaction to any revisions to their national strategy.

In the interim, the SDNPA Education & Outreach Team will continue to work with YHA and project partner 'So Sussex'. Truleigh Hill will be the focus of education sessions as part of the delivery of the 'Generation Green' project during 2021-2022. The project, part of a first phase of delivery by a consortium of partners and funded through the Green Recovery Fund. The aim of the project is to connect young people with outdoor learning at key sites across the SDNP. The project will be creating self-guided and provider led educational experiences and supporting additional South Downs Youth Action volunteering activities.

Health & Well-Being (HWB) programme

The Truleigh Hill project was successful in attracting funding from the Cabinet Office. Phil Paulo and Kate Drake, Health & Well-Being lead established a pilot to demonstrate the value of the site as a location for HWB programmes. Truleigh Hill was well suited, being readily accessible and having existing facilities for groups referred to local schemes.

As part of the developing programme, Truleigh Hill will become one three HWB 'hubs' across the National Park. This legacy is mainstreamed in the current version of the Corporate Plan. In terms of experience developed from the pilot project, from a delivery perspective the site is perfect to support communities in and around Shoreham. The experience from the Truleigh Hill project also helped to develop and test the themes and objectives of the HWB strategy approved by members on the 25th March 2021.

With Truleigh Hill becoming a HWB Hub within this year, and in support of our HWB objectives, this presents a great opportunity to support some of those less active and engaged communities to access the National Park.

Engagement with Youth Audiences

Local youth Audiences engaged within the project (Esteem, Air Cadets & DofE). Activities conducted on site with youth audiences with a view to involving participants in action plan delivery. Running of a Youth Action Day in collaboration with SDNPA Educational Team. Objective to involve Air Cadets in the production of Educational Resources for Truleigh Hill and also setting up a new historical Geocache Trail specifically for Truleigh Hill.

We have continued the partnership with Shoreham College and commenced the delivery of the John Muir Award with year 5/6 students. Shoreham College have become a key stakeholder and will be delivering sustained annual engagement, volunteering and JMA delivery at Truleigh Hill in future years. Film content will provide opportunities to promote this work with a view to attracting other schools to develop similar relationships with the site. This links to the production to educational resources and content for the Truleigh Hill Area.

'Bike it Wild' Project

This element of the project proved to be a very positive partnership and a good vehicle through which to engage local schools. There is scope for this to develop into a longer-term programme. This is in line with Proposal 8 in Glover's Landscapes Review 'A night under the stars in a National Landscape for every child'. The objective is to have funding in place for a future programme, which could run at multiple locations within the National Park. Scope to approach COVE 'match funding' contribution to the wider programme.

Successes/Challenges

<p>KEY SUCCESSES:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Truleigh Hill will be the focus of education sessions as part of the delivery of the ‘Generation Green’ project during 2021-2022. The project is being funded through the Green Recovery Fund. The aim of the project is to connect young people with outdoor learning at key sites across the SDNP. • Engagement with schools and youth groups was a success of the project – and provided a good basis for future programmes of work. Most notably around involving groups in the ‘Bike it Wild’ Project. • Delivery of the spring programme of the John Muir Award with Shoreham College was extremely successful and had great feedback. • Project targets for engagement and outreach were exceeded in the first year and demonstrated there was significant demand at this site. • A management plan and action plan was co-developed for the site based on consultation with local residents and interest groups. This was an important output for the project. • Success in testing pilot actions – especially outreach and HWB work, as the site was well suited. The project was able to attract small amounts of external funding for this pilot work. This work has been mainstreamed in both the Corporate Plan and HWB Strategy for the future.
<p>UNFORSEEN IMPACTS:</p>	<p><u>Unforeseen period of sick leave for the Project Officer (During Quarter 2 – 2019)</u></p> <p>Delay in project progress due to the impact of a 3-month period of sick leave and a phased return to work for the Project Officer due to a heart attack. This resulted in delays in project progress and a number of forecast activities. The main impact as on Steering Group meetings and the review/development of the Landscape Plan and draft Action Plan. The plan took longer than forecast to produce – though it did allow for further opportunities to be identified. A delay also occurred in the completion of the Landscape Assessment by external contractor provided by Terra Firma. This was also the result of the acting Consultant being sign off work on sick leave.</p>

	<p><u>NOTE on COVID-19 National Health Crisis.</u></p> <p>Following the UK Government guidance on the implementation of a national lockdown and social distancing, as of 23rd March 2020 all practical/on site activity relating to the Truleigh Hill Landscape Project has been halted until further notice and the availability of revised guidance from the UK Government and SDNPA Senior Management Team.</p> <p>This had a significant impact of the remaining phases of the Truleigh Hill Landscape Project. Many of the scheduled volunteer tasks were unable to run due to restrictions and the need to comply with Government Guidance. This meant that a number of the practical interventions involving contractors and volunteers had to be cancelled.</p> <p>There were also plans for a number of community events to occur during the second phase of the project (one in May and one in August 2020), both of which we were unable to run because of restrictions on community events and mass gatherings being in place.</p>
<p>LESSONS LEARNED:</p>	<p>Community engagement is a key skill and takes time to do properly. Sites like Truleigh Hill, with a complex range of issues and opportunities was well suited to this approach.</p> <p>It was useful to have the focus of a dedicated project officer for sites like this, and to supplement the work of the Area Team. This sort of deep, and focussed, landscape-based project work is a vital component of our delivery.</p> <p>There is often a reticence to use dedicated project officers at the SDNPA, which may be a legacy of our experience around HLF and other externally funded projects.</p> <p>It is often difficult to retain the experience accrued through the project within the Authority. However, it remains a good delivery model – and one we are now using for the Ouse Valley CARES project.</p> <p>The project was originally conceived as a longer-term project (5 Years) but was managed down to a budget. In retrospect, this was a mistake as the additional time was definitely required.</p> <p>Given the impact of COVID-19 on the work programmes of the SDNPA, and this project in particular, a longer extension would have been ideal. The focus of the project on engagement and outreach for the coastal plain communities and difficult to reach audiences was good groundwork for a post-COVID situation, where access and opportunities for outdoor recreation were opening up again.</p>

	<p>Given the strong engagement focus for the project, it would have been better to involve the Education & Outreach Team earlier on with the Project Steering Group. This would have helped us to learn how projects can be effectively managed when they sit between different Theme Delivery Boards. This may be useful to reflect on as part of the review of the Delivery Boards and their approach later on in 2021.</p> <p>The project had some success in attracting small pots of external funding, but did not manage to pull together a larger funding bid. This was in spite of exploring different funding options during the course of the project. The project would have been well suited for a Lottery Fund bid – though with the Changing Chalk project in progress this proved difficult. Again, being limited to a two-year project meant this restricted potential to work up a bid.</p> <p>The site has a complex Planning history, and this proved to be one area of the project that was difficult to reconcile. The project officer worked with Planning Colleagues to ensure that a more consistent approach on the site. The link through the bi-annual meetings between the Planning Link officers and the Eastern Area Team was helpful in this respect. However, it proved difficult to manage this area of cross-directorate working. In retrospect it would have been helpful to have had input from Planning colleagues on the project steering group. This would have ensured they got a sense of the project as a whole.</p> <p>A lot of effort went into developing effective liaison with Horsham District and ensuring there was regular catch-ups and site meetings. It proved difficult for the Project Officer to get engagement with the project as it was a small, and largely peripheral site for DM Officers in the District Council.</p> <p>Internal communications for the project could have been improved. It is often difficult for individual projects to get their message across internally. There was good oversight through the project Steering Group. The project also reported regularly to P&R Committee, though this was often at a very high-level. The member visits to the site were perhaps the most beneficial as it allowed time and opportunity to understand the challenges and opportunities offered by the site.</p> <p>Many positives that have come out of the Truleigh project and the allocation of NSIP S106 funds from Rampion, not least our own learning and development in relation to these large scale project. The learning curve for all of us was huge with regard to managing these types of projects, the scale of the funding available, the monitoring of the S106 funds and ensuring that any spending was in line with very specific S106 covenants.</p>
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	<p>The development and experience from this project allowed us to review the process for spending of future NSIP funds in order to ensure to demonstrate that we were able to improve processes in order to minimise the risk to the SDNPA in relation to spending S106 funds.</p> <p>More planning around the hand-over of the ongoing engagement and relationship management for the post-project would have been ideal. This was inevitably impacted upon by all the unforeseen challenges of Covid-19, but it should have been better factored into the closedown of the project.</p>
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SDNPA & SDVRS Resources

ESTIMATED:	The original budget allocation was £84,000.
ACTUAL:	The actual spend was £89,875.

Project Budget

SDNPA BUDGET (INCOME):	Total income (£)
PARTNERS BUDGET (INCOME):	Total income from partners (£)
OTHER INCOME:	Total other income (£)

PLANNED TOTAL EXPENDITURE (£)	ACTUAL TOTAL EXPENDITURE (£)	TOTAL PLANNED RESOURCE COST (If applicable)		TOTAL ACTUAL RESOURCE COST (If applicable)	
		IN KIND VALUE (£)	SALARY COST (£)	IN KIND VALUE (£)	SALARY COST (£)
84,000	89,875				
EXPLANATION:	<p>The original budget for the project was £84,000. This project was due to end in July 2020. The steering group took the decision to extend the project through until October 2020. This was to cover delays to the project as a consequence of an unforeseen period of illness with the project officer being signed-off for 3 months.</p>				

	This resulted in the need to cover additional salary costs for the Project Officer. The total spend on the project was £89,875 which represents a small over-spend on the planned budget.
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Value for Money

<p>WHAT IMPACT WAS ACHIEVED?</p>	<p>The project proved a very effective test-bed for a number of developing SDNPA work programmes. This was especially the case with developing our approach to Health & Well-being. We were able to trial a number of approaches with local communities on a site that was well-suited, accessible and had suitable facilities on site. The project was also very successful in term of developing engagement and volunteering opportunities with both disadvantaged groups, and for youth group, who are often under-represented in environmental activities. This was evidenced by the 'Bike it Wild' element of the project, and the developing links with the John Muir programme and local schools/colleges.</p> <p>The focus of having a project officer to support this development, and to co-ordinate across a number of programmes of work was also a valuable model – and one that we have also applied with the Ouse Valley CARES project. It was also useful to start the process of engaging with local community groups around what they would like to see for their local landscape – as a model of developing local Nature Recovery Networks.</p> <p>There were some small-scale landscape improvements delivered through the project – principally the planting of new hedgerows and screening, and sowing of some wild-flower corridors. There are a number of identified improvements on the area Action Plan that remains to be followed up. A plan to deliver in these through the link with the Eastern Area Team is in place.</p>
<p>WAS THE PROJECT VALUE FOR MONEY?</p>	<p>Yes – It is considered that the project delivered good value for money, though the delivery of volunteer activity was very heavily impacted by Covid-19 restrictions. In spite of these impacts, a lot was achieved in the two years of the project – and with only a small over-spend. Additional value has been delivered in term of supporting and developing other strands of SDNPA work – particularly Health & Well-being programmes and youth engagement.</p>

