

Report to **Policy & Resources Committee**
Date **19 July 2022**
By **Countryside & Policy Manager (Central)**
Countryside & Policy Manager (Western)
Title of Report **Partnership Management Plan Delivery - Farming in Protected Landscapes programme & The Rural Economy**

Note

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to

I. Note progress on the delivery of the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme and Our South Downs.

I. Introduction

1.1 This report is subsequent to a members' workshop on 6 April 2022, which provided an update on the implementation of the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme and the Authority's work in relation to the Rural Economy, including Our South Downs. Members are asked to note the report and support the work being undertaken in both areas.

2. Policy Context

2.1 FiPL is a national programme run by Defra and administered locally by the 44 Protected Landscape bodies (for National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) in England. It is a three year programme that commenced in July 2021 and ends in March 2024.

2.2 The decision to leave the European Union has resulted in the United Kingdom transitioning from the Common Agricultural Policy to a new agricultural support system known as Environmental Land Management. FiPL was developed by Defra as part of their Agricultural Transition Plan, to provide support to farmers and land managers across protected landscapes in England during this transition period and in recognition of the role they play in managing these important areas.

2.3 FiPL has four programme outcomes: climate, nature, people and place. In addition to these Defra outcomes, projects funded under FiPL must also contribute to the delivery of the protected landscape's management plan.

2.4 At the protected landscape level, applications are assessed and scored on their delivery towards FiPL programme outcomes and management plan objectives by a Local Assessment Panel (LAP). In the South Downs National Park (SDNP), the LAP comprises seven farmer representatives and one representative each from Natural England and the Authority.

2.5 The Rural Economy is one of our Corporate Priorities and seen as *'the Duty in pursuit of our Purposes'*. The Authority's Rural Economy work facilitates success across multiple corporate plan priorities acting as the conduit and enabler between our work and the enterprises. For example: **Climate Change**: in pursuit of Net Zero with Nature by 2040, land based

solutions to carbon; **Nature Recovery**: in pursuit of 33% Nature Recovery by 2030, promoting corporate social responsibility; **A National Park for All**: sharing the value of the National Park to under-represented groups to promote greater social diversity.

2.6 The comprehensive evidence base regarding the Rural Economy was developed to assist in direction of policy including; SDNP Economic Profile update (2020 revised), Business Impact Survey, SDNP (2020), Covid 19 Business Impact Report, SDNPA (2020), Rural Economies Comparison Report and the SDNPA (2020), Economic Recovery Strategy. Through the research and evidence it showed that the land-based industries, the visitor economy and food and drink are intrinsically linked to the National Park due to their size and contribution to output and employment, with food & drink having a good deal of overlap with both the land-based industries and the visitor economy.

2.7 Launched this spring 'Our South Downs' is a business community for local economic and social enterprise partners who contribute positively to the National Park purposes. It represents an efficient, effective, good value for money vehicle for engaging with South Downs Enterprises. It allows the SDNPA to communicate the business networks across the SDNP on a 'one to many' model that sets the strategic direction for our work adding value and facilitating success across the Authority and the National Park.

3. Issues for consideration

3.1 Authority officers administer FiPL locally on behalf of Defra. A National Framework document which set out how the programme is to be managed, must be adhered to.

3.2 Management of the FiPL programme (in accordance with the National Framework) in the first year, went according to plan, with 72 projects completed and full spend of budget. It is not currently envisaged that the programme's management in years 2 and 3 will create any challenges and as a result, to date, there are no issues for members to consider.

3.3 Our South Downs is overseen by the 'Thrive team' with reports and updates provided to the Rural Economy Theme Programme Board. A business focus group has been formed by twenty members who provide feedback and steer to the team.

4. Options & cost implications

4.1 Funding for the FiPL Programme derives from Defra and at a local level, is administered by the Protected Landscape bodies. Funding for the South Downs National Park FiPL programme over the full three years is £1,571,971.

4.2 Each Protected Landscape body is able to use a proportion of their budget (defined by Defra) towards advice and guidance and administration costs. For the Authority, this is £93,000 per annum. Staff have been recruited internally over the three year period to manage the programme. This leaves a total project spend of £1,292,971 (£588,381 - Year 1, £353,448 - Year 2 and £351,142 - Year 3).

4.3 Our South Downs secured funding with approval by SMT and the Rural Economy Theme Programme Board in November 2020. SDNPA. Member endorsement was given on 29 April 2021. No further funding is required and set up is designed to be as self-service possible.

5. Next steps

5.1 Officers will be working with the LAP to deliver years two and three of the FiPL programme across the SDNP, ensuring projects deliver across the range of FiPL programme outcomes and Partnership Management Plan priorities.

5.2 Officers from the Thrive team are working on a sustainable programme to enable businesses to demonstrate and improve their actions around people, place and planet through a sustainable certification programme being designed using an existing tried and tested model through Green Tourism. The new initiative will be launched in 2023 and will be called Green South Downs.

6. 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?	Not applicable. This report is for note only and does not contain any proposals for members to consider.
Which PMP Outcomes / Corporate plan objectives does this deliver against	<p>PMP Outcome 1 / Priority 1.3 (To maximise environmental, cultural and economic benefits of agri-environment and forestry schemes across the National Park).</p> <p>PMP Outcome 10 /Priority 10.1 (To strengthen and support sustainably managed land-based industries and local enterprise).</p> <p>Priority 10.2 (To increase awareness and desirability of the South Downs as a special place to visit).</p> <p>Priority 10.3 (To establish the South Downs as an exemplar in sustainable tourism).</p> <p>Corporate Plan 7.4 (Rural Economy).</p>
Links to other projects or partner organisations	FiPL is a national programme run by Defra and administered locally by the 44 Protected Landscape bodies.
How does this decision contribute to the Authority's climate change objectives	<p>Implementation of some projects under the FiPL programme may contribute to the Authority's climate change objectives.</p> <p>Business is encouraged through Our South Downs to contribute to the South Downs Trust on its 'Trees for the Downs' work as well as a statutory requirement to reduce their carbon footprint through Green South Downs sustainable Certification.</p>
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?	<p>There are no equalities implications arising from this report. Equalities issues are taken into account in relation to any decisions taking with regard to the application and administration of any grant funding submission and in the operation of the FiPL programme.</p> <p>Further, it is a key objective of the Rural Economy works stream to help ensure that persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic are encouraged to gain access to the National Park by encouraging the provision of support and services to enable those under served in being able to access the National Park to do so.</p>
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	None.

Implication	Yes*/No
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	None.
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	None.
Are there any Data Protection implications?	The use of personal data in the delivery of activity related to FiPL and the Rural Economy is undertaken in compliance with the Authority's obligations under data protection legislation. Advice of the Authority's Data Protection Officer has been sought when establishing how personal data is required to be used for delivery within these work streams.
Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the SDNPA Sustainability Strategy?	None

7. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

- 7.1 As this is an update report there are no risks arising directly from it. Risks associated with the specific work streams are identified and managed by the teams involved and captured on work specific risk registers, or Directorate / Corporate risk registers as appropriate

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Appendices None

SDNPA Consultees Director of Countryside Policy and Management

External Consultees None.

Background Documents None.