

RAPC 448/21

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

RESOURCES, AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE – 1 MARCH 2021

Legacy Landscape Partnership Memorandum of Understanding

Report by: Paul Walton, Head of Environment and Rural Economy

Summary:

The Our Past, Our Future Landscape Partnership Scheme is due to end in April 2021. The key partner organisations involved in the scheme have drafted a memorandum of understanding to provide a framework for the partners to continue working together beyond the life of the scheme. The draft MoU is presented for agreement and adoption by the RAPC on behalf of the Authority.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Committee approve the Authority entering into the legacy landscape partnership memorandum of understanding attached as Annex 2 to the report, subject to agreeing final minor amendments to the MoU with the Legacy Landscape Partners.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Our Past, Our Future Landscape Partnership Scheme (OPOF) is due to end in April 2021. The scheme's final evaluation demonstrates that one of the scheme's key successes is the value of partnership working to deliver landscape-scale projects.
- 1.2. To support the scheme's ongoing legacy a draft memorandum of understanding (MoU) has been developed by the partners – see Annex 2. The aim of the MoU is to provide a framework for collaborative working beyond the life of the scheme. This will include identifying specific projects and developing joint funding bids as and when grant funding opportunities arise and widening the partnership so that new partners can join.
- 1.3. The MoU will not be legally binding but is intended to provide coherence and structure over an initial period of two years.

2. Background

- 2.1. Our Past, Our Future (OPOF) is a £4.4million Landscape Partnership Scheme for the New Forest supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Evaluation of the scheme has been carried out by Resources for Change (www.r4c.org.uk) between May and December 2020 and follows on from the interim evaluation undertaken in 2018.

- 2.2. One of the key findings from the final evaluation is that OPOF has created a culture of landscape-scale collaboration across the New Forest by developing trust, joint commitment, and communication amongst key organisations, with NFNPA providing a core lead and management function. It is recognised that the value of the OPOF partnership has been to get everyone aligned, focussing on what is best for the New Forest. Five key factors are suggested to support the culture of collaborative working: commitment, coordination, communication, connectivity, and continuity.
- 2.3. Continued collaboration is identified as a key strategic legacy challenge for the future. This requires a structure through which complexity can be managed, relationships improved, and priorities aligned, but requires nurturing through leadership and continued cooperation.
- 2.4. To support ongoing collaboration beyond the life of OPOF, a draft MoU has been developed in discussion with the 10 key OPOF partners. Once agreed the MoU will provide a framework for the scheme's ongoing legacy and is not intended to be legally binding. It will cover an initial period of two years but may be superseded with a new agreement if the partnership is successful in applying for future funding.
- 2.5. An MoU is an important means of demonstrating the scheme's ongoing legacy that the National Lottery Heritage Fund helped to set up and support.

3. Resources

- 3.1. The MoU will be led by the New Forest National Park Authority. This will involve setting up and running meetings, developing a coordinated response to grant funding opportunities as and when they arise, and managing and coordinating any future bids that may be submitted on behalf of the partnership.
- 3.2. After the agreement has been signed by existing partners, the potential for new collaborators to join the partnership, such as RSPB and the Countryside Education Trust, will be explored.
- 3.3. Administration of the MoU as identified above will require officer time. This is likely to be around 20 hours over a 12-month period and will be carried out by the Grants Officer and Communications Manager.

4 Aligning the Legacy Landscape Partnership with the Partnership Plan for the New Forest

- 4.1 The projects in the OPOF scheme made a significant contribution to the delivery of the 2015 – 2020 Partnership Plan for the New Forest. The Partnership Plan is due to be updated this year and any new landscape scale project can once again be the practical expression of the action needed to deliver the ambitions of the new Plan. The proposed minor amendments to the draft MoU are intended to underline the close relationship between the work of the various landscape legacy partners and the National Park Partnership Plan. Demonstrating the relationship between a multi - stakeholder partnership and a strategic plan for the area will be an advantage when approaches are made to funding bodies.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee approve the Authority entering into the legacy landscape partnership memorandum of understanding attached as Annex 2 to the report, subject to agreeing final minor amendments to the MoU with the Legacy Landscape Partners.

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Papers:

RAPC 448/21: Cover Paper

RAPC 448/21 Annex 1: OPOF Final Evaluation Summary

RAPC 448/21 Annex 2: Draft Legacy Landscape Partnership MOU