

6. MOORS FOR THE FUTURE OPERATIONAL PLAN 2019/2020 (SD)

1. Purpose of the report

This report puts before Committee the seventh Operational Plan from the Moors for the Future Partnership. This plan is for the commitments in the financial year 2019/20 and includes a look forward, both at commitments for the following year (2020/21) and the expectations of business development during and beyond this time frame. The Operational Plan is an appendix to this report

Key Issues

During the year of this 2019/20 Operational Plan the Moors for the Future Partnership has so far raised and committed funds of £4.9m. The value of projects in the pipeline (all approved, subject to contract) is an additional £2.5m. This is supported by £95,000 contribution from this Authority and a further £69,500 direct core funding from partners, with an anticipated £78,000 additional core funding from projects

The Authority's Senior Leadership Team and this Committee receive business cases for new projects from Moors for the Future Partnership as appropriate within Standing Orders.

The implementation of these business cases bring significant investment into the moorland landscape of the Peak District and South Pennines and all have then been successfully out-turned over the past 15 years. Over £34m has been secured and invested by the Partnership's team over this period.

This plan sets out our programme delivery plan – and helps the committee approvals process better understand how new projects fit into the bigger vision of delivering both the National Park Management Plan 2018-23 and key activities of the 2016-19 Corporate Strategy (and the Strategy for 2020-25 currently in development) whilst taking into account the requirements of the Moors for the Future Partnership partner organisations.

An integral part of the Programme Management approach is the production of this annual Operational Plan which adds to the transparency of the whole programme and allows the committee approvals process to scrutinise new proposals more effectively in terms of benefits realisation.

The projects within the Operational Plan are funded by, and involve, 17 important partners and private landowners. This will give the Authority good engagement opportunities with key partners who have significant influence over the management of the moorland landscape.

Programme Management

There are typically around 20 projects being delivered at any one time, delivering three objectives outlined in the section below.

Recruitment has been undertaken in the last few months, increasing the capacity of the Conservation Works Officers, Research and Monitoring Officers, GIS Officers and an additional Project Manager - which will strengthen our project delivery resource over the period.

During 2019/20, in addition to managing the delivery of our projects the programme management team (as part of the Moor Business Project) will develop a new Vision and Strategy to give direction and secure the future of the partnership. We will be reviewing our business documents, including resourcing and costings methodologies.

We will continue to develop relationships with new partners and will use the methods agreed in the Partnership's Business Plan to achieve a balanced budget.

We continue to actively manage the core funding deficit - exploring additional projects with partners is one of the programme managers' core activities, responding to calls for potential work and proactively seeking financial resources with current and future partners, including maximising match funding opportunities. We have a high level of confidence that we will achieve this funding during the year. This is a business approach supported by the 2014 – 2020 business plan approved by this Committee.

Communications and Engagement

We will continue to develop projects that enable us to achieve our first objective "To raise awareness and promote positive action for the conservation of the moorland landscape."

We will continue to deliver our programme of engagement activities. Working through MoorLIFE 2020 and other projects, we will run a programme of face to face engagement for urban and rural communities, land managers and partner organisations to inform and educate people about the important benefits of the uplands. As part of this we are delivering a programme of youth engagement. We are also building on the success of Community Science Project by embedding citizen science across our programme to support existing volunteers and recruit new ones.

Conservation and Land Management

We will continue to develop projects that enable us to achieve our second objective "To develop and deliver sustainable land management for these important upland resources, ensuring appropriate consideration of all of their benefits".

This will be achieved through the continuing delivery of landscape scale restoration with our largest year of capital project delivery through our EU LIFE funded MoorLIFE 2020 project (ML2020), Defra funded Moor Carbon project, Environment Agency funded Building Blocks project and our Private Lands Portfolio.

As an integral part of all of our conservation work we will continue to work with and engage land managers on the benefits of working with the Upland Management Groups' Land Manager Guidance. As part of this we will seek opportunities to work directly with land managers to facilitate and deliver sustainable land management through our ML2020 project.

Science and Monitoring

We will continue to develop projects that enable us to achieve our third objective "To develop expertise for the sustainable management of moorlands ensuring that the programme is properly resourced with the capacity and capability to achieve this"

We will produce a long-term monitoring strategy to facilitate evidencing the ecosystem service trajectories of blanket bog restoration methods, allowing us to fully evidence the benefits and lifecycle of the impacts of our work.

We will continue to monitor our core sites and maintain the monitoring of vegetation and water table depth across past monitoring sites which will feed into our trajectories of restoration work into the future. Supplementing this core monitoring work, we will maintain our research facilitation with academics and students at Universities across the UK, and will continue to support external research projects, working toward becoming a hub for moorland research in the UK.

2. Recommendation

That the Audit, Resources and Performance Committee supports this Operational Plan and recommends it to the Moors for the Future Partnership's Strategic Management Group

How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?

The strategic fit of the Operational Plan is relevant to the Peak District National Park Management Plan Vision and covers many aspects which will support the delivery aims of the National Park Management Plan 2018-23 - specifically:

Special quality 1: Beautiful views created by contrasting landscapes and dramatic geology

Special quality 2: Internationally important and locally distinctive wildlife and habitats

Special quality 3: Undeveloped places of tranquillity and dark night skies within reach of millions

Special quality 4: Landscapes that tell a story of thousands of years of people, farming and industry

Special quality 6: An inspiring space for escape, adventure, discovery and quiet Reflection

Special quality 7: Vital benefits for millions of people that flow beyond the landscape boundary

Areas of impact:

- 1: Preparing for a future climate
- 2: Ensuring a future for farming and land management
- 3: Managing landscape conservation on a big scale
- 4: A National Park for everyone
- 5: Encouraging enjoyment with understanding
- 6: Supporting thriving and sustainable communities and economy

In addition the Operational Plan will support the National Park's Corporate Strategy 2019-24 by contributing towards several Key Performance Indicators in particular the outcomes for A Sustainable Landscape that is conserved and enhanced, A National Park loved and supported by diverse audiences and Thriving and sustainable communities that are part of this special place.

Background Information

This Operational Plan is a practical manifestation of the current (2014-2020) Business Plan.

The work to produce a new strategy will continue to be progressed during 2019/20. The Moor Business Project, working alongside consultants, will produce a new Funding Strategy and other relevant business documents. Our second Annual Review was produced in November 2018.

The Resource Management Meeting on 4 December 2018 endorsed this Operational Plan with suggested changes which have been made. Consultation has been undertaken with Senior Leadership team, Chief Finance Officer, Head of Law, Head of Information Management - and suggested amendments included in this report

Proposals

The intention (agreed at ARP in January 2013) is to have an on-going Moors for the Future Operational Plan which will be reviewed once a year, bringing the next financial year version to an appropriate Committee. The annual reporting to Committee will follow the programme below with some flexibility to fit around large projects in order for the reporting to encompass work in a meaningful way. Individual reports will continue to be brought to Committee as necessary to gain authority for new initiatives as required, to meet Standing Orders.

The reporting structure is:

- **Resource Management Meeting in December** The draft Operational Plan for the following year will be presented for comments.
- **Audit Resources and Performance Committee in January**
Final version of Operational Plan put to Committee for approval; Committee then to recommend the final version (after any changes required by Committee) to Moors for the Future Partnership Strategic Management Group.
- **Moors for the Future Partnership Strategic Management Group in February**
Accept the Operational Plan for the upcoming financial year.

Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?

Financial:

3. The resources available to produce the Operational Plan each year are those of the existing staff team with welcome advice from senior officers. No additional resources are available.

Financial summaries are included in the Operational Plan (pp 13 and 15) in terms of core income and project expenditure. Project expenditure in 2019/20 is likely to be around £7.4m.

The Authority's core contribution to the Partnership in 2019/20 is £95,000. The corporate overhead related to the Moors for the Future Partnership staff will be £289,317 in 2019/20.

The shortage in core funding (aim £330k, projected £243k) is a high priority for the programme team. One of the outputs of the Moor Business Project is a funding strategy. The programme managers continue to dedicate 20% of their work programme to business development during 2019/20.

The Partnership has a history of sound financial management, income control (including draw down of funding and claims) is of great importance and overseen by the Programme Office Manager. Regular updates are held with the Chief Finance Officer with monitoring of cash flow and grant receipts for all projects within the MFFP programme, to ensure that individual projects meet their financial objectives.

Risk Management:

The 2019/20 Service Risk Register is attached as an appendix. Risks identified in this register are reviewed quarterly and reported within the corporate performance management regime. Risks, Issues and Dependencies of the programme of projects are monitored weekly and reviewed quarterly alongside the Programme Progress Log. Our health & safety log is reviewed weekly.

Project Managers update their project risk logs weekly and report via the weekly programme status update meetings with in depth updates held monthly.

We produce a Programme Progress Log four times a year which identifies approvals and financial values of projects - with risks identified through a Red/Amber/Green assessment - and includes brief summaries of progress highlights. Income and Expenditure of the programme team are also monitored by the Partnership's Strategic Management Group at its quarterly meetings.

To mitigate the issue associated with the core funding, assistance from Senior Leadership Team in terms of advocacy work with senior personnel from partners, or potential partners, is requested.

There is uncertainty identified within the project fee element of core funding which will not be certain until part way through the year. We anticipate £40k associated with projects and to mitigate this risk we monitor our core expenditure budget very carefully and restrict any expenditure until income is assured.

The Head of Programme Delivery, Moors for the Future Partnership and the programme management team will continue to pay close attention to partner advocacy during the 2019/20 delivery year in order to maximise any available resources. Engaging additional funding partners is an objective which is included in our individual work programmes.

Sustainability:

Protection of the peatlands of our core work area is a key part of protecting land based carbon, which internationally has the potential to have a huge impact on climate change. In addition, the ecosystem service benefits of our blanket peat work is well known, reducing the risk of flooding, improving water quality and improving the landscape, so highly valued for recreation.

From a business sustainability perspective, this proposal fits within the context of the Moors for the Future Business Plan 2014-2020. Undertaking additional projects for our partners, building on work which is already being done, is a key part of our business model and has allowed massive improvements to the landscape and conservation of the Dark Peak and beyond. Creating synergies between projects is a key component of the sustainability of the Moors for the Future programme.

4. Equality:

There are no equality issues arising from this report.

5. Background papers (not previously published)

None

6 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Moors for the Future Partnership 2019/20 Operational Plan

Appendix 2 - Risk Register 2019/20

Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date

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