

## **BUSINESS PLAN 2017/18 QUARTER 3 REVIEW**

**Summary:** To review progress in Quarter 3 of the financial year 2017/18.

**Recommendation:** That the Quarter 3 Review be noted.

**Officer Ref:** Simon Smith, Project Development and Business Planning Officer

### **Background**

#### Process

1. The management team undertook a review of progress against the work programme on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2018. This review identified areas of significant progress or where things have developed differently. It did not focus on areas of work which are performing as originally expected in the business plan.
2. This report does not attempt to celebrate the role or work of the Board. That task is achieved through updates, the annual review, press releases and digital media.

#### Financial Outcome

3. The Board's current forecast (green) is now predicting a surplus of £22,512 compared to a budgeted deficit of £8,930 in the budget (beige), a variance (blue) of £31,442. This variance is in part attributable to a correction for historic SDF grant offers not paid. Lines in the budget summary (**Appendix A**) which have variances of over £1,000 are explained in the notes under the budget table. The biggest variance in both income and expenditure was due to the Saving our Magnificent Meadows programme. We did extend the project with extra funding but not by as much as originally budgeted.
4. The balance for the Discovery Centre show separate balances for the café and the wider site. They show the café running at a deficit of £21,197 and the wider site with a deficit of £9,069. The offer and staffing at the café has changed and its financial performance has improved.
5. Funds held in the Board's reserves are predicted to be £150,857. This is compliant with the Board's reserves policy. If funds invested in and to be recouped from the Discovery Centre are included this figure rises to £371,248.

#### Operational Progress

6. Areas of significant progress or deviation from the original work programme are outlined below.

##### Rural Land Management

- Farming Forum arranged at the Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

#### Historic Environment

- The Voluntary Wardens are working with Historic England (HE), visiting Scheduled Monuments, sending HE reports & following up with practical work where necessary. 9 reports have been submitted this year to date and practical work undertaken on two sites. Two Tweets posted by 'Mike the Warden' following work at Sodbury Hill Fort were picked up by HE and retweeted to their 208,600 followers

#### Biodiversity

- Grasslands bid to the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation achieved a Stage 1 pass and the Board has been invited Board to develop a stage 2 bid - deadline 29th March.

#### Development and Transport

- Through working with an Advisory Group and officer input an extra £5m of funding was secured from Network Rail to reduce the landscape and visual impact of the Great Western Electrification Project. As a public body NR has to adhere to section 85. Ongoing input and negotiation continues.

#### Awareness and Understanding

- Educational Folders and localised inserts have been produced with Countryside Fund funding. The Wardens will take them to schools and groups to promote warden led outdoor activities with young people.

#### Exploring and Enjoying

- The Cotswolds Gateways bid was submitted to the Tourism Growth Fund at the end of November. We should hear the outcome by late March.

#### Participation

- 30 competitors took part in the Hedgelaying Competition held at Fyfield Farm near Chipping Norton in November. Positive feedback was received from all involved. The beginners' pairs and beginners' categories involved competitors from recent hedgelaying courses.

#### Tourism

- Two donations to the Caring for the Cotswolds Visitor Giving Scheme were received this quarter. With further subsequent donations we are close to having sufficient funds to trigger a new call for projects.

#### Strategic Economic Plan

- LEADER issued £137,365 in grants to 7 projects creating 4 jobs and securing £204,600 in match funding this quarter. Vegetable Matters a new farm shop and café supported by LEADER was one of the winners at the CPRE county awards scheme for its sustainable building design and community benefits.

### Cross Cutting Activity

- The Management Plan has undergone its first round of consultation with responses currently being considered for inclusion. A refreshed timetable has been produced leading to the adoption of the new plan in June.
- The Board contributed information on housing pressures and a case study to the CPRE report; An Independent Review of Housing In England's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty 2012-2017. The case study example wasn't used in the final report, Beauty Betrayed: how reckless housing development threatens England's AONBs, but it did identify the Cotswolds as one of 8 AONBs under the greatest pressure for housing development.

### Corporate Management.

- David Drew MP released a video supporting the idea of a Cotswolds National Park via social media which receiving positive feedback and coverage by BBC. Geoffrey Clifton MP is to visit the South Downs National Park early in the New Year and is going to host a briefing of MPs in Feb.

## 7. This quarter has also seen a change in personnel

### Officers

#### Leavers

Richie Smith	Community Engagement Officer (SOMM)	Oct
Eleanor Reast	Conservation Officer (SOMM)	Oct
Chris Brant	Communications Officer	Dec
Richard Watson	Trails and Access Officer	Dec

#### Starters

Rebecca Jones	Trails and Access Officer	Jan
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### Board Members

Leavers;	Val Kirby
Starters;	Brendan McCarthy

### How we will promote and make audiences aware of this item

8. This report is produced for the Executive Committee as part of the Board's governance arrangements. Much of this material will be turned into a quarterly e-newsletter and accompanying film. These in turn will be promoted through traditional and digital media.

### **Supporting Papers:**

### **Appendix 'A' - 2017/18 Finance Report Quarter 3**