

Report to	South Downs National Park Authority
Date	18 September 2012
By	Director of Planning
Title of Report	Local Plan Member Task and Finish Working Group
Purpose of Report	To propose the setting up of a Local Plan Member Task and Finish Working Group to meet regularly to provide a forum for discussion and debate on detailed matters relating to the development of the South Downs National Park's (SDNPA) single Local Plan and Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule

Recommendation: the Authority is recommended to:

- 1) Agree the setting up of a Local Plan Member Task and Finish Working Group which will meet on a regular basis between October 2012 and December 2014 to provide a forum for SDNPA Members to discuss and debate the issues and options relating to the emerging Local Plan and Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule;**
 - 2) Approve the draft Terms of reference of the Task and Finish Working Group**
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 At the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) Planning Committee meeting of 9 August 2012 there was agreement to produce a single South Downs National Park (SDNP) Local Plan under a revised timescale set out in a revised Local Development Scheme (see **Appendix I**), which was adopted by the Planning Committee at the same meeting.
- 1.2 To allow full discussion and debate with SDNPA Members it is proposed that a 'task and finish' Member working group be set up to provide a forum for a regular in-depth discussion and debate around the issues and options that need to be explored in developing the Local Plan and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule.
- 1.3 The setting up of such a 'task and finish' Member working group will not limit on-going engagement with all SDNPA Members on local plan issues and options, and any considerations of the group will go to Planning Committee and the SDNPA, as appropriate.

2. Background

- 2.1 The SDNPA's Planning Committee, at its meeting on 9 August 2012, approved the approach of developing a single South Downs National Park (SDNP) Local Plan, as opposed to separate Core Strategy and Sites and Designations Development Plan Document. The Planning Committee also approved and adopted a revised Local Development Scheme which sets out the timescales for producing the Local Plan, and associated CIL Charging Schedule.
- 2.2 There are six key stages for the development of the emerging Local Plan:
 1. issues and options consultation (March / April 2013, following on from workshops and engagement in Autumn 2012 in connection with the Management Plan)
 2. preferred options consultation (March / April 2014)
 3. pre-submission publication (January 2015)
 4. formal submission to the Secretary of State (June 2015)
 5. examination (June 2015-March 2016)
 6. adoption by the SDNPA (by June 2016).

2.3 When adopted, the SDNP Local Plan will replace all the inherited existing local plan and core strategy policies that district councils had previously adopted and the SDNPA inherited when it became the local planning authority for the South Downs National Park in April 2011, and also all the joint core strategy policies that the SDNPA has subsequently adopted. It is worth noting that this will only have effect within the SDNP and will not supersede the policies which apply in any of the 12 authority areas outside the SDNP.

3. The Case for a Local Plan Members Task and Finish Working Group

3.1 When adopted the SDNP's Local Plan will provide the single planning policy framework for the Park. It will set out how development proposals will need to demonstrate that they are taking into account the SDNP's two purposes and the SDNPA's duty, and the aspirations of the Management Plan. Its importance on how the SDNP evolves over time cannot be overstated.

3.2 To allow the SDNPA's planning policy team the opportunity to have regular and detailed informal discussions and debates with SDNPA Members at an early stage it is recommended that a Members' Task and Finish Group Working Group, be established. Most other NPAs have a similar Members' working group, either meeting in public, or in private. It is expected that such a task and finish group would meet on approximately a monthly basis, between formal consultation periods of the Local Plan.

3.3 It will be important for Members who are on the group to be able to commit to most of the meetings as having the opportunity to hear and participate in the majority of discussions will be critical to keep the momentum of the Local Plan.

3.4 It is proposed that the initial meeting would be held immediately after the external autumn planning workshops scheduled for November 2012, and that there will be a further two meetings scheduled to consider potential issues and options briefing papers and draft Issues and Options consultation document before it goes before the SDNPA Planning Committee and full SDNPA meeting in February 2013. prior to the Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation in March 2013.

3.5 It is likely that there would need to be between six to eight meetings required between the Issues and Options consultation finishing in April 2013 and the commencement of the preferred options consultation commencing in March 2014, and a further four to six meetings between the preferred options stage and pre-submission (January 2015). No further meetings are envisaged after the pre-submission stage as there is likely to only be minor modifications prior to formal submission in June 2015.

3.6 It is recommended that the Task and Finish Working Group should comprise of about eight Members as this will provide a forum of sufficient breadth for wide ranging discussion and debate, even where some Members are unable to attend. It is recommended that the chair of the working group be the incumbent SDNPA Planning Committee Chair.

3.7 The proposed terms of reference are as set out in **Appendix 3** of this report and these would need to be considered and agreed by the SDNPA prior to the first meeting of the Task and Finish Working Group.

3.8 It is important to note that those SDNPA Members who do not participate in the working group will have the opportunity to view the agendas, briefing notes and outcome notes of the meeting, and there will be regular updates on progress at SDNPA Member workshops. In addition, all the formal stages of the Local Plan will require sign-off from the SDNPA Planning Committee and full SDNPA, apart from the formal submission, where there will only be minor modifications from the pre-submission stage.

4. Resources

4.1 The SDNPA resource required to lead these meetings will be from the three planning policy officers and planning policy lead officer. The Director of Planning will also be involved. There will be a requirement for the Members selected to be available for the majority of meetings (up to about 18 in total) over a period from December 2012 up to December

2014.

5. Risk management

- 5.1 Risk: should the SDNPA not agree to the proposed Local Plan Member Task and Finish Working Group there is a high probability that the timetable set for the Local Plan will not be able to be met due to the lack of early input from SDNPA Members into the development of the emerging Local Plan.
- 5.2 Mitigation: that the SDNPA agrees to the setting up of such a Task and Finish Working Group.
- 5.3 Risk : The Task and Finish Working Group has, or considers it has, greater say in the evolution of the Local Plan and CIL.
- 5.4 Mitigation: the Terms of Reference will need to ensure clarity over the Group's purpose and remit, and on-going liaison with other SDNPA Members through regular discussions at Member workshops and SDNPA meetings, to formally approve progress, are outlined.

6. Human Rights, Equalities, Health and Safety

- 6.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

7. External Consultees

- 7.1 None.

TIM SLANEY Director of Planning

Contact Officer:	Tim Richings
Tel:	01730 811 752
email:	tim.richings@southdowns.gov.uk
Appendices	1. Revised Local Development Scheme (August 2012) 2. Project timetable for the South Downs National Park Management Plan and Local Plan 3. Draft Terms of Reference for the Task and Finish Working Group
SDNPA Consultees	Chief Executive Officer, Director of Corporate Services, Director of Planning, Director of Strategy and Partnerships, Head of Operations, Chief Finance Officer, Deputy Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer & Legal Services
Background Documents	Report PC 52/12, SDNPA Planning Committee meeting 9 August 2012