

Unconfirmed minutes – to be confirmed at the next meeting of the Authority
SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY **Agenda Item 3**

AUTHORITY MEETING 26 July 2012

Held at Cowdray Hall, Easebourne, West Sussex at 2.00pm

Present:

Alun Alesbury	Sebastian Anstruther	Ken Bodfish	David Burden	Jo Carr
Janet Coles	Norman Dingemans	Jim Funnell	Neville Harrison	Barbara Holyome
David Jenkins	Diana Kershaw	Jeremy Leggett	Barry Lipscomb	Margaret Paren (Chair)
Charles Peck	Sue Saville	Andrew Shaxson	Deborah Urquhart	

SDNPA Officers: Trevor Beattie (Chief Executive Officer), Andrew Lee (Director of Strategy & Partnerships), Phil Belden (Head of Operations), Kevin Gardner (Monitoring Officer), Catherine Vaughan (Chief Finance Officer) and Rebecca Haynes (Member Services Officer).

The Chief Executive Officer informed Authority Members that Catherine Vaughan (Chief Finance Officer) had been appointed as the interim Chief Executive Officer of Brighton & Hove City Council. Authority Members would be kept informed regarding the appointment of an interim Chief Finance Officer. Catherine was congratulated by Authority Members.

APOLOGIES

45. Apologies were received from Nick Bennett, Jennifer Gray, Doug Jones, Tom Jones, Mark Kemp-Gee, Sue Seward, Tom Tupper & Pete West.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

46. Sebastian Anstruther declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 7 as one of his tenants uses the South Downs Brand.

MINUTES

47. With the correction of the spelling of Jo Carr's name; the minutes of the Authority meeting held on 19 June 2012 were approved and signed as a correct record by the Chair.
48. In regard to Minute 13:
- The Chief Executive Officer informed the Authority Members that the judging panel for the 'Life in our landscapes' photo competition would consist of; SDNPA Member Doug Jones, Comedian and actor Hugh Dennis, Steven Watkins, Editor of Outdoor Photography magazine and Nick Heasman, Western Area Manager for the SDNPA.
 - The Authority Chair thanked those who had participated in the South Downs Way 40th Anniversary Footprints walk.

URGENT MATTERS

49. No urgent matters were raised.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

50. No members of the public present asked to speak.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S PROGRESS REPORT

51. Report 16/12 on progress since the last report on 19 June 2012 was introduced by the Chief Executive Officer.
52. The Chief Executive Officer updated Authority Members on the following topics:
- Local Sustainable Transport Fund: The SDNPA was a partner in 2 successful bids which will release DfT funding totalling £5.38m for local sustainable transport initiatives:

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- A £3.8m joint bid with the New Forest National Park and lead partner Hampshire County Council, and a £1.58m bid based around Lewes which involves both Lewes District Council and Brighton & Hove City Council
- The joint national Parks/HCC bid submission was supported by the Major Partnerships Panel at its meeting on 22 December 2011. It was too early to say exactly how the money would be allocated to more than 30 planned projects, since this would be determined by the programme boards on which all of the partners, including the SDNPA, were represented
- SDNPA Member Barry Lipscomb would attend the first meeting of the Programme Board for the joint national Parks/HCC project. This will determine future representation and working methods. The SDNPA will recruit a Project Manager to oversee delivery of the LSTF projects for which it has direct responsibility. This position would be fully funded by the project
- An update would be provided to the next Major Partnerships meeting and a report would be made to the Resources & Performance Committee as soon as the budgetary implications were clear
- IT Provider: As a few SDNPA Members had experienced technical issues with their personal IT equipment, pool laptops would be available on loan for them:
 - It was commented that the IT changeover was an extraordinary achievement over a short period of time
 - The Chief Executive Officer passed his thanks to the Director of Corporate Services and the Head of IT for all their hard work in achieving a smooth transition
 - The Chief Executive Officer explained that all Authority Members were now registered as VIP users with the IT Help Desk
- South Downs Centre: It was explained that the South Downs Centre was a working name for the part of Capron House being purchased by the NPA and an official title would be needed once the current planning application was validated. The Authority Members agreed that the official title should remain as the South Downs Centre

Alun Alesbury joined the meeting at 2:14pm

- Authority Members commented that it was pleasing to know that the name 'Memorial Hall' would still be used
- The Chief Executive Officer clarified that occupation of the South Downs Centre was on target with vacant possession expected at the end of September 2012. The Authority was waiting to hear from Chichester District Council regarding the current planning application
- IDOX uniform planning system: During the first quarter of 2012 42% of applications had been registered within 3 days. Notwithstanding there was a backlog, some of which had been inherited. Additional resources were in place and generally the backlog had begun to reduce. There was one Authority where significant backlogs remained and the SDNPA had agreed to jointly pay for additional resources to remove them, freeing that Authority's own staff to concentrate on new applications;
 - The new structure was much more stable with a single transparent system which was superior to the previous system
- The visit by Richard Benyon MP had been cancelled and alternative dates were being sought
- In line with proposals originally supported by the Major Partnerships Panel, the project officer for the Wooded Heaths Partnership has worked up a stage 1 bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) which, if successful, could lead to Stage 2 and generate almost £2m in HLF funding for heathland management up to 2018. This would go through all of the Authority's budgeting and approval processes and, if successful, would take effect from April 2014. On a slightly longer timescale, bids were also being submitted for the EU LifePlus fund and Landfill Tax

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53. **Resolved:** that the Authority

Notes the progress made by the South Downs National Park Authority since the last Report in July 2012.

POLICY REVIEWS

54. Report 17/12 was introduced by the Head of Operations. He thanked the Authority Members who had been involved in the working and task groups and highlighted sections from the 5 policy reviews:

- The Rights of Way Accord had been signed with the four local highway authorities, with discussions underway regarding monitoring and standards. Area Teams have played an important role in 'adding value'. Access projects may now bid for SDNPA funds and may also be able to get support from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund initiatives within the National Park (see above)
- Natural England had instigated a review of National Trails and the SDNPA were still awaiting the outcome of this; the South Downs Way (SDW) Management Plan expires in 2014 and had been used to identify priorities by the NPA
- As a result of the Hotspots survey specific areas had been targeted, for example encouraging responsible dog ownership and addressing fly-tipping in the Eastern Downs. A similar scheme to 'Sussex Pathwatch' was being discussed in Hampshire which was likely to involve a higher profile for motorised vehicles as part of their 'Countrywatch' initiative, dealing with rural crime on all levels
- Consideration of broadening volunteers' skills and responsibilities to undertake greater PR and education roles was being developed with the Volunteer Ranger Service; gaps and opportunities had been identified as a result of the Volunteering policy review
- Work would continue on the inherited South Downs Trademark, and the emerging Communications and Engagement Strategy will take forward the wider initiative to develop a shared identity and sense of place for the National Park

55. Authority Members commented:

- The report was evidence of the strong progress that had been made in policy development. In order to maintain the momentum it was necessary to take forward the recommendations by 'mainstreaming' them in the work on the Management Plan
- Officers were congratulated on the agreement and signing of the Rights of Way Accord
- The need to increase disabled access into the National Park was highlighted
- Encouraging and increasing responsible access to the National Park could reduce anti-social behaviour at 'hotspots'
- It was necessary to ensure that Volunteer Rangers were involved in the production of the Volunteers action plan
- Licensing arrangements and the development of the South Downs Brand should be incorporated within the emerging Communications and Engagement Strategy
- The possibility of discussing with local bee keepers use of the South Downs kite mark for local honey

56. In response to Authority Members questions, the Chief Executive Officer, the Director of Strategy & Partnerships and the Head of Operations clarified:

- The outcomes from each review would be mainstreamed within future SDNPA Business Plans and would inform the development of the Management Plan. Any financial implications for this financial year had already been included within the existing budget
- The RoW Accord should help in improving access to Access Land

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- The new Hampshire “Countrywatch’ would be involved in all areas of rural crime and not just those involving motorised vehicles as was the case with the West Sussex Pathwatch
- There was a diversification process to encourage volunteers to work in all directorates of the Authority, not just within Operations
- The SDNPA was in the process of developing a policy on apprentices and student placements, which includes discussions with Plumpton College. Authority Members would receive a report on this in the Autumn
- The issues raised by Authority Members would also be taken forward within the ‘pillars’ of the South Downs National Park Management Plan

57. **Resolved:** that the Authority agrees to:

Support the approach as set out in Section 3 of this report, including the actions, next steps and direction of travel set out in the 5 appendices. In particular:

- 1) Endorse the action taken in establishing the Rights of Way Accord, with a report on activity and progress to be brought to the Authority by March 2013;
- 2) Adopt the existing South Downs Way Management Plan and agree to a timely review next financial year, with a report back to members on the outcome of the National Trails review;
- 3) Endorse the work being done to address the various anti-social problems in South Downs ‘hotspots’;
- 4) Agree the establishment of a South Downs Volunteering Partnership and supporting the development of the South Downs Volunteer Ranger Service;
- 5) Agree that work on the development of the South Downs brand be taken forward as part of the Communications and Engagement Strategy.
- 6) Conclude the licensing agreements with the three existing users of the South Downs product kite mark.

STATE OF THE NATIONAL PARK REPORT (SNPR)

58. Report 18/12 was introduced by the Evidence and Performance Manager who asked Authority Members to note the timeline, thanked them for their involvement and noted that:

- Authority Members and Partners had had extensive involvement in the shaping of the report throughout its preparation
- The report had benefitted from extensive stakeholder engagement and, in particular, the South Downs Partnership had played a very valuable role
- Some minor additions were still being made e.g. the design work was to be completed and an acknowledgement of consultees was to be included
- The SNPR would be launched in October and would include a ‘Micro’ site, which would supplement the report and allow users to access the additional information that sits behind each published chapter

59. Authority Members commented:

- Some statistics, such those on population and travel to work patterns, were potentially misleading as they were distorted by the inclusion of Petersfield and Lewes. These should be separated out where possible
- However, others noted the report includes a clear statement regarding the difference in the nature of the challenges between market towns and the remainder of the National Park
- The use of mean averages, on rainfall for example, disguises a very large range of variation across the National Park
- Authority Members commended Officers on the production of a creative and accessible document

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60. In response to Authority Members questions the Chief Executive Officer and the Evidence and Performance Manager clarified:
- A Foreword would be included in the finished document from the Authority Chair
 - The Communications Team were in the process of identifying publishing costs
61. **Resolved:** that the Authority:
1. approve the State of the National Park Report Pre-Publication Report
 2. delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair, to agree any final changes to the Pre-Publication Report ahead of publication and the accompanying online information for the website
 3. note the timeline for the launch of the report and accompanying online 'Micro' site

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK VISION

62. Report 19/12 was introduced by the Director of Strategy & Partnerships. The 2 options were explained.
63. Suggestions for amendments to Option A were made:
- 1st paragraph replace 'have adapted' with 'are adapting'
 - Change 2032 to 2050
 - To change the language used to be clearer that the statement is detailing the future
64. Authority Members commented:
- Option B used more 'jargon' than option A
 - Some of the text within option B was good and could be utilised within other SDNPA documents
65. **Resolved:** that the Authority incorporating the amendments as stated in minute 63
- 1). select Option A for the Vision from the versions set out in this report.
 - 2). note that, as part of the South Downs Management Plan, impact measures will be developed as a basis for monitoring progress towards the achievement of the Vision

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

66. Report 20/12 was introduced by the Monitoring Officer.
67. In response to a question from an Authority Member the Monitoring Officer clarified that the Major Partnerships Panel were not a decision making Committee
68. **Resolved:** that the Authority:
- 1). approve the amendment to the Terms of Reference of the Resources and Performance Committee shown in Appendix 2 to report 20/12

FEEDBACK FROM THE ASSOC OF NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITIES (ANPA) WORKSHOP

69. The Authority Members received a Power Point Presentation from Authority Member Sue Saville and the Communities Strategy Lead on the recent ANPA workshop they had attended. This had been a useful opportunity to meet and to learn from representatives of other National Parks. The model of joint member/officer training was a good one which should be repeated.
70. Joint presentations would be provided to Authority Members following future ANPA events attended by SDNPA Officers and Members.

ACCESS LAND ANNUAL REPORT

71. The Authority considered a report from the Head of Operations (Report 21/12) and he explained the context and challenges.

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72. Authority Members commented:
- It was important to have effective, non intrusive signage
 - It was helpful to have an annual report and it should become an annual item to future NPA meetings
73. In response to Authority Members questions the Head of Operations clarified:
- The SDNPA had some powers, but not duties in relation to Access land and it was important to work with landowners on any issues
 - The 10 year review of Access Land had not been delivered. Defra considered that they did not have a legal requirement to do so
74. **Resolved:** that the Authority:
- 1). receive an annual report at the end of each financial year on Access Land work;
 - 2). note the work done to date.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

75. The Authority noted the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 14 June 2012.
76. The Committee Chair highlighted that from the 12 July meeting there was only 1 Development Management item and therefore delegation was working well. There were 3 policy items and he reminded Authority Members that a great deal of work was being completed on policy items within the Planning Team.

AUDIT COMMITTEE

77. The Authority noted the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held 12 June.
78. The Committee Chair stated that the Health and Safety Policy had been completed and circulated to SDNPA staff

RESOURCES & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

79. The Authority noted the minutes of the Resources & Performance Committee meeting held 21 June
80. The Committee Chair commented:
- There was a typo in the spelling of Authority Member Jo Carr's name
 - All Authority Members were welcome to attend future meeting as there was a standing item with a presentation from one Director at each meeting
81. Authority Members commented:
- Consideration should be given to encouraging contractors to use local suppliers within the area of the National Park, subject to compliance with relevant procurement and legal requirements. This model had been developed in planning for the South Downs Centre and Officers should investigate whether it was possible to make wider use of it in future National Park procurements
82. In response to Members questions the Chief Executive Officer and the Monitoring Officer clarified:
- Contractors working on the South Downs Centre were committed to using local suppliers within a 30 mile radius of the site
 - Restrictions under EU procurement rules would mean that the SDNPA would need to be cautious so as not to impose challenging tender requirements on potential tenders
 - A consultation open day had been planned to involve local people in the plans for the South Downs Centre

Authority Member Janet Coles left the meeting at 4:08pm

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REPORTS FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO EXTERNAL BODIES

83. The Authority noted the reports regarding the Rural West Sussex Partnership, and West Sussex Environment & Climate Change Board.
84. Authority Member Norman Dingemans highlighted point 3 of the issues raised at the meeting of the West Sussex Environment & Climate Change Board of significance to the SDNPA.
85. The Authority Chair reminded Authority Members that the next meeting of the Authority would be at the offices of East Hampshire District Council at Penns Place on 18 September 2012.
86. The meeting dates for 2013 would be circulated to Members in early August.

Chair

Meeting closed at 4:12pm