

AUTHORITY MEETING 11 DECEMBER 2012

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

Present:

Ken Bodfish	Jo Carr	Janet Coles	Norman Dingemans	Jim Funnell
Jennifer Gray	Neville Harrison	Barbara Holyome	Doug Jones	Tom Jones
Mark Kemp-Gee	Diana Kershaw	Jeremy Leggett	Barry Lipscomb	Margaret Paren (Chair)
Charles Peck	Sue Saville	Andrew Shaxson	Tom Tupper	Deborah Urquhart

SDNPA Officers: Trevor Beattie (Chief Executive Officer), Tim Slaney (Director of Planning), Andrew Lee (Director of Strategy and Partnerships), Phil Belden (Director of Operations), Neil Slatter (External Funding Manager), Allison Thorpe (Strategy Lead, Access and Recreation), Kevin Gardner (Monitoring Officer), Catherine Vaughan (Chief Finance Officer) and Fiona MacLeod (Member Services Manager).

CHAIR OPENING REMARKS

121. The Chair welcomed Catherine Vaughan back in her role as Chief Finance Officer to the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA), and expressed her thanks to Nigel Manvell. Members were advised that the new Chief Executive Officer for Brighton & Hove City Council was Penny Thompson.

APOLOGIES

122. Apologies were received from Alun Alesbury, Sebastian Anstruther, Nick Bennett, David Burden, David Jenkins, Sue Seward, and Pete West.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

123. Jennifer Gray declared a public service interest in Agenda item 13 (East Hampshire Joint Core Strategy – Way Forward) as a member of East Hampshire District Council and Portfolio Holder for Planning.

MINUTES

124. Subject to amendment of Minute 107 to read Report 27/12, the minutes of the Authority meeting held on 18 September 2012 were approved and signed as a correct record by the Chair.
125. With reference to Minute 95, (New Housing and Planning Package) the Authority was still awaiting clarification from government that national parks would be included in the definition of protected areas, and this clarification was being followed up.
126. With reference to Minute 95 (Neighbourhood Planning), the Chief Executive Officer reported that the government had announced that a further £5,000 would be available in addition to the existing £20,000 funding for 'frontrunner' Plans, with an additional £25,000 available when the Plans had been found to be sound.

URGENT MATTERS

127. No urgent matters were raised.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

128. Mr Robert Cheesman spoke on behalf of the South Downs Society and requested that the SDNPA accelerates its provision of signage at the points where principal roads entered the

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South Downs National Park (the Park). He felt that, although the SDNPA was good at consultation, action on the ground was needed to ensure people were aware of the Park identity and boundaries.

129. The Director of Strategy and Partnerships advised that a Working Group was being set up with Members and external branding and identity specialists.

NEED FOR PART II EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

130. The Monitoring Officer reminded Members that this item had been part of the revision of the Standing Orders in June 2012 under SO 5.2 (e).
131. **Resolved:** that the Authority would take the Appendix under Agenda Item 18 as read, and not move into Part II session.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S PROGRESS REPORT

132. Report 28/12 on progress since the last report on 18 September 2012 was introduced by the Chief Executive Officer.
133. The Chief Executive Officer updated Authority Members on the following topics:
- State of the National Park Report: the response to the Report continued to be favourable, and CDs and USB sticks would be ready for issue before Xmas. Members expressed their thanks to all officers and staff involved in the Report production;
 - South Downs Management Plan (SDMP): a tailored workshop had been held with Lewes Town Council and a further 4 sessions had been agreed with other local authorities;
 - South Downs Centre: the separation of the two parts of the building had begun, and the results of the tenders were being assessed to include an element of value engineering to keep within budget. A Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) status of 'very good' was achievable. Regular project updates would be provided to the Resources & Performance Committee and the SDNPA;
 - Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Brighton & Hove City Council: the MOU had been developed as a model for future partnership working. Members recognised this as an example of where partnerships with other local authorities could take place in support of key strategic gateways/hotspots across the Park;
 - Wooded Heaths Project: the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid had been unsuccessful and the Authority was awaiting detailed feedback prior to resubmission and review of other options. Members were advised that it was not uncommon for such a bid to be unsuccessful on its first submission;
 - Growth & Infrastructure Bill (Clause 7 on telecommunications infrastructure in protected landscapes): the Authority had made strong representations to the Minister regarding rollout and delivery of broadband within the Park. The Bill would be debated in the House of Commons and the Lords in the coming months;
134. **Resolved:** that the Authority
- 1) notes the progress made by the South Downs National Park Authority since the last Report in September 2012.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FUND (SCF) AND MAJOR PARTNERSHIP FUND (MPF)

135. Ken Bodfish, Chair of the SCF Advisory Panel, introduced the presentation from the External Funding Manager. The work of the Panel in advising the Director of Strategy and Partnerships had been, in the absence of a management plan, necessarily reactive, but would become more proactive as the plan develops. The Panel would welcome suggestions from Members for potential projects and their local involvement in opening ceremonies etc.

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136. Members received a presentation on both the SCF and MPF elements of Report 29/12 from the External Funding Manager (copy available on request).
137. Report 29/12 was introduced by the External Funding Manager, who responded to Members' comments on the SCF as follows:
- a) although approximately 50 applications had been unsuccessful to date, in almost every case the team has given advice to the applicants regarding alternative funding opportunities;
 - b) a database to track bids and capture information about progress was being commissioned;
 - c) the sense of community pride, wellbeing and creativity manifest in the bids supported by the Panel was recognised and welcomed;
 - d) the £10m figure that had been achieved as matched funding for SCF projects was made up of 80% cash value funding and 20% being matched 'in kind' support;
138. The External Funding Manager clarified that MPF projects were those where the funding requested was in excess of £20,000.
139. The External Funding Manager responded to Members' comments on the MPF as follows:
- a) paragraph 81 bullet point 5 - the Forestry Commission was not part of the joint funding of an advisory officer for the Youth hostels Association;
 - b) work was in progress for a proposal for a Service Level Agreement with appropriate organisations which could provide tailored advice and support to potential applicants
140. **Resolved:** that the Authority:
- 1) notes the progress and the development of the two South Downs National Park Authority grant funding programmes.

LOCAL SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT FUND (LSTF) SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY DELIVERY

141. Report 30/12 seeking formal approval for the SDNPA programme of activity as funded through the LSTF project (Sustainable Transport Solution for England's Newest National Parks) was introduced by the Director of Strategy and Partnerships and the Strategy Lead for Access and Recreation.
142. In response to Members' questions, the following points were made:
- small grants funding for cycle parking to include secure storage facilities and other initiatives was one of the measures included in the LSTF project;
 - bus operators had assisted the SDNPA and partners in developing the bid and two Working Groups had been set up with public transport operators to consider initiatives such as joint ticketing facilities, family explorer tickets, Downlander tickets and other new services;
143. Reference was made to the fleet of 13 hybrid buses operated by Brighton & Hove Bus Company and the recent launch of the bus named after the late Paul Millmore, a staunch supporter for the creation of the National Park and founder of the Volunteer Ranger Service in the South Downs.
144. **Resolved:** that the Authority:
- 1) approves the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) participation in the Sustainable Transport Solution for England's Newest National Parks Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) programme;
 - 2) approves the SDNPA LSTF proposed budget as detailed in Appendix I to report 30/12; and
 - 3) approves the entering into of a joint legal agreement/Memorandum of Understanding between the project partners.

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LOCALISM ACT 2011 – CHANGES TO STANDARDS REGIME

145. Report 31/12, seeking SDNPA approval to arrangements to comply with the Localism Act 2011, was introduced by the Monitoring Officer, who reminded Members that the report covered the final three elements for compliance with the Act.
146. The Monitoring Officer updated Members on the responses received regarding the registration and disclosure of non pecuniary interests. Following discussion, the consensus was in favour of requiring Members to disclose public service interests during a meeting, rather than registering and publishing such interests.
147. Clarification was given on the following points:
- a) receipt of any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of £50 should be registered within 28 days of receipt, subject to the retrospective time limit in Recommendation 3 to the Report;
 - b) if the gift or hospitality was received from the same source, a cumulative total must be kept and registered once £50 had been reached
148. **Resolved:** that the Authority agrees:
- 1). the recommendation of the Selection Panel to appoint Graham Ault as Independent Person for a period of four years;
 - 2). that the Independent Person receives no payment other than travelling and subsistence expenses at Authority-approved rates;
 - 3). that the Member Code of Conduct be amended to require the registration of gifts or hospitality within the previous twelve months, where these are estimated to be of at least £50 in value (individually or in total), by written or email notification to the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of receipt;
 - 4). that the Member Code of Conduct be amended to require Members to disclose a 'public service interest' at a meeting of the Authority, where the Member considers that interest relevant to an item of business being considered at that meeting. The disclosure shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. ('public service interest' means membership of any of the following: a public or charitable body, any body to which the Member has been appointed to by the Authority, any political party, trade union or other body one of whose principal purposes is to influence public opinion or policy);
 - 5). the arrangements for investigation and determination of allegations of failure to comply with the Member Code of Conduct, as recommended by the Standards and Audit Committee; and
 - 6). that the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority and the Chair of Standards and Audit Committee, be authorised to make any necessary changes to the Member Code of Conduct and related protocols to give effect to the above decisions.

CONVERGENCE OF PLANNING PRE-APPLICATION AND SECTION 106 ADMINISTRATION CHARGING REGIME

149. Report 32/12, considering the charging regime attached to the SDNPA planning pre-application and Section 106 administration service, and the method in which the SDNPA provided minerals and waste development advice, was introduced by the Director of Planning.

Janet Coles left the meeting at 3.27pm.

150. In response to a question regarding the cost of pre-application work on affordable housing for local people, the Director of Planning clarified that there would be either a reduced or nil charge in these cases.
151. **Resolved:** that the Authority agrees:
- 1). the introduction of a charging regime, as set out in Appendix 1 to Report 32/12, to the South Downs National Park Authority development management pre-application service to be introduced across the South Downs National park on 7 January 2013;

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- 2). the introduction of a formal pre-application service and charging regime for Minerals and Waste development, as set out in Appendix 4 to Report 32/12, to be introduced across the South Downs National Park on 7 January 2013; and
- 3). the charging of a 5% fee for administering Section 106 Obligations from 7 January 2013.

SDNPA RESPONSE TO ASH DIE BACK DISEASE

152. Report 33/12 to inform the Authority on Ash Dieback (*Chalara fraxinea*) was introduced by the Director of Operations.
153. Members were informed that the confirmed cases for recently planted sites and the wider environment had increased to 190 and 155 respectively, although there were no confirmed cases in the National Park. It was suggested that there might be an opportunity for a revitalised Tree Warden Scheme, which had been operating in East Sussex (see 155g below).
154. The information provided by the SDNPA Communications Team last month was welcomed by Members.
155. The key objectives and actions from the Interim Control Plan from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) published on 6 December 2012 (<http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/2012/12/06/pb13842-tree-taskforce-interim/>) were summarised as follows:
 - a) reduce the rate of spread
 - b) develop resistance to the disease in the native UK ash tree population
 - c) encourage public, landowner and industry engagement and action in tackling the problem
 - d) build resilience in the UK woodland and associated industries
 - e) research spore production at infected sites
 - f) work closely with other European countries which have been infected with the disease to share data and experience on resistance to the disease
 - g) fund a study to accelerate the development of Observa TREE, a tree health early warning system used by volunteer groups
 - h) work with horticulture and nursery sectors on a long-term resilience to the impact of the disease and other plant health threats
156. The Forestry Commission had also published practical guidance for the future management of ash trees (<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/IND-92PJKX>).
157. **Resolved:** that the Authority:
 - 1). notes the potential impact of this disease on ash trees within the South Downs National Park;
 - 2) liaises with the Forestry Commission and others to monitor the situation and provide information to people in and around the National Park, as appropriate, when expert advice is received; and
 - 3) agrees for officers to respond to proposed actions coming from Government, reporting back to Members as soon as practical, especially if additional resources are requested, to ensure that the impact on landscape, biodiversity and the local economy is minimised where possible and managed where necessary.

EAST HAMPSHIRE JOINT CORE STRATEGY – WAY FORWARD

158. Report 34/12, seeking a decision from the SDNPA on the way forward on the East Hampshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) following receipt of the preliminary report from the Planning Inspector, was introduced by the Director of Planning, who highlighted the revised Recommendations tabled at the meeting
159. Members' attention was drawn to the fact that the Inspector's concerns related to the evidence base as much as the other three issues. Lessons should be learned for the development of the evidence base at an early stage of the SDNPA Local Plan.
160. Members supported the suspension of the examination of the East Hampshire JCS, and the continued joint working with East Hampshire District Council. The suspension would be for

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a maximum of 9 months and the timescales for the SDNPA Local Plan would be reviewed as a result.

161. There would be budgetary implications regarding anticipated additional costs of between £20-30K and additional work load pressures on the Planning Team during this period. Resources would be reviewed in the New Year.
162. **Resolved:** that the Authority:
- 1). agrees to the 'suspension' of the examination into the East Hampshire Joint Core Strategy, to allow further work to be carried out by the South Downs National Park Authority and East Hampshire District Council, to help overcome the issues identified by the Inspector (subject to this approach being agreed with East Hampshire District Council); and
 - 2) subject to the suspension being agreed by both authorities, agrees that the detailed joint working arrangements be negotiated with East Hampshire District Council by the Director of Planning in consultation with the Authority Chair and Planning Committee Chair.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

163. The Authority noted the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 13 September and 11 October 2012 and the unconfirmed minutes of the Planning Committee held on 8 November 2012.

STANDARDS AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

164. The Authority noted the unconfirmed minutes of the Standards and Audit Committee inaugural meeting held on 13 September 2012.
165. The Committee Chair drew Members' attention to the minor proposed changes to the Committee Terms of Reference (which were agreed), the two unqualified conclusions in the Annual Governance Report, and the progress of the internal review of the SDNPA set up.

RESOURCES & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

166. The Authority noted the confirmed minutes of the Resources & Performance Committee meeting held on 5 September 2012 and the unconfirmed minutes of the Resources & Performance Committee meeting held on 14 November 2012.
167. The Committee Chair highlighted that the Directorate presentations at the Committee meetings during 2012 had proved helpful to the Committee in gaining a strategic overview of the Authority's work and resources. Members' attention was drawn to the Procurement and ICT reviews, and the Committee would continue to review major or outsourced projects.

REPORTS FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO EXTERNAL BODIES

168. Members received three reports (Rural West Sussex Partnership, West Sussex Environment and Climate Change Board, and Petersfield Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group).
169. Norman Dingemans drew Members' attention to the two issues from his report on the Rural West Sussex Partnership regarding the charging levels for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), and Rural Economy Action Plan in the context of the SDNPA Local Plan.
170. Doug Jones drew Members' attention to Petersfield Town Council's wish to commit £15,000 to the Petersfield Neighbourhood Plan in the next financial year.
171. Deborah Urquhart gave a verbal update on the latest Coast to Capital meeting on broadband issues for a sustainable community, highlighting that it was important for the SDNPA to take a lead.

Chair

Meeting closed at 4.07 pm