

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY PLANNING COMMITTEE 15 APRIL 2015

Held at The Memorial Hall, South Downs Centre, North Street, Midhurst at 10:00am.

Present:

Andrew Shaxson (Chair)	Alun Alesbury	Jennifer Gray	Neville Harrison
Barbara Holyome	David Jenkins	Doug Jones	Charles Peck
Ian Phillips			

Margaret Paren (ex officio) Norman Dingemans (ex officio)

SDNPA Officers: Tim Slaney (Director of Planning), Lucy Howard (Planning Policy Manager), Anna Ludford (Planning Policy Officer), Dan Ashe (Planning Policy Officer), Dan Oakley (Dark Skies Lead and Ranger), Chris Fairbrother (Landscape Strategy Lead), Richard Ferguson (Planning Officer), (Becky Moutrey (Senior Solicitor), and Stella New (Member Services Support Officer).

ITEM 1: APOLOGIES

707. Apologies were received from, Diana Kershaw and Tom Jones.

ITEM 2: DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

708. Doug Jones declared a Public Service interest in items 5, 7, & 8 as a member of Buriton Parish Council, and resident of one of the communities referred to.
709. Neville Harrison declared a Public Service interest in items 5, 7, & 8 as the Chair of Southease Parish Meeting
710. Andrew Shaxson declared a Public Service interest in items 5, 7, & 8 as a member of Chichester District Council and Elsted and Treyford Parish Council.
711. Alun Alesbury declared a Public Service interest in items 5, 7, & 8 as a member of Stoughton Parish Council, and also declared he knew the public speaker as detailed in minute 721.
712. Barbara Holyome declared a Public Service interest in items 5, 7, & 8 that mentioned Winchester Districts.
713. Jennifer Gray declared a Public Service interest in items 5, 7, & 8 as a member of East Hampshire County Council.
714. Norman Dingemans declared a Public Service interest in items 5, 7, & 8 as a member of Arun District Council, which covers the area of Findon.

ITEM 3: UPDATES ON PREVIOUS COMMITTEE DECISIONS

715. There were none.

ITEM 4: URGENT ITEMS

716. There were none.

STRATEGY & POLICY

ITEM 5: DRAFT SETTLEMENT BOUNDARIES

717. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC37/15) and update sheet.
718. The Committee heard from John Uphill, who spoke in support of the item on behalf of himself.
719. The Director of Planning reminded the Committee that they were being asked to consider the draft Settlement Policies and the methodology for defining them, which the public speaker had voiced support for. The application referred to by the speaker was being considered under delegation by Chichester District Council against current Local Plan policies.
720. The Committee commented:
- Their thanks to the public speaker, who had spoken in support of the draft Settlement policy.

- Their support in principle for the proposed methodology for defining settlement boundaries.
- Their concerns regarding a policy that supported inclusion of existing ribbon developments, as these could not be viewed as a coherent part of the main settlement and in some cases stretched into open countryside.
- The need for inclusion of a principle that would prevent artificial extensions of the settlement boundary where there was no spatial justification.
- The difficulty of excluding fingers of development based on definition.
- A settlement boundary could restrict further detrimental fingers of development in conjunction with the other landscape policies.
- Their anticipation that settlement boundaries in fingers of development would tend to be drawn more tightly to existing buildings rather than the edge of gardens.
- The difficulty of considering applications where there was no settlement boundary that added clarity.
- The importance of considering the opinion of local communities who were in the process of preparing Neighbourhood Plans, and had a clear vision as to where settlement boundaries should lie.
- Whether land surrounding village halls could be considered for inclusion and preferably for affordable housing proposals.
- Whether former farm buildings converted to other uses could be considered for inclusion '*on a site by site basis*' rather than '*in most cases*', as some re-uses may not justify inclusion.

721. Alun Alesbury declared that he knew John Uphill who had been a fellow commuter in the past.

722. In response to questions officers clarified:

- Sites that fell outside settlement boundaries were covered by the countryside part of the Spatial Strategy.
- Settlement boundaries were considered to offer stronger protection, and national planning policy supported their implementation in order to secure high quality and appropriate growth.
- The allocation of land for development referred to in the draft Housing Policy would be carried out via a separate process. Allocations would be made either within or adjoining the existing settlement boundary, and the settlement boundary subsequently redrawn where appropriate.
- Once the draft policy was endorsed, the Community Planning Toolkit would include guidelines on settlement boundary methodology as this could be a difficult area for community groups to negotiate.
- Proposed sites outside the settlement boundary could be considered as exception sites where affordable housing may be acceptable.
- The reasons for establishing settlement boundaries a) and f), and e) and h), were similar and would be rationalised.
- The wording under 'Detached parts of settlements' could cover some ribbon developments.
- Officers would carry out further consultation with the Biodiversity Strategy Lead with regard to the Greatham settlement boundary and the buffer zone surrounding the nearby heathland Special Protection Area (SPA).
- 'Internationally' designated wildlife sites would be included under green spaces, as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) were internationally protected sites.
- The wording '*principles* for inclusion or exclusion' allowed for a comprehensive methodology.

- The wording of ‘*in most cases*’ with regard to former farm buildings converted to other uses, allowed flexibility, however ‘*site by site basis*’ could offer clarity for external users including Neighbourhood Planning community groups.
723. It was proposed and seconded to include the wording ‘*site by site basis*’ in place of ‘*in most cases*’ under the principles for inclusion or exclusion. Following a vote, the proposal was carried.
724. It was proposed and seconded to vote on the officer’s recommendation, subject to the amendment of the wording of the principles for inclusion or exclusion as set out in minute 723, and comments made by the Planning Committee being addressed, including rationalisation of the reasons for establishing settlement boundaries, and the inclusion of the word ‘*internationally*’ designated wildlife sites. Following a vote, the proposal was carried.
725. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee:
- 1) Endorsed the direction of the draft Settlement Boundaries Review Methodology as detailed in Appendix 1 of Report PC37/15 for publication alongside, and use to inform revised boundaries in, the draft Local Plan Preferred Options document, subject to the comments made by the Planning Committee being addressed.
 - 2) Noted that the draft Local Plan Preferred Options document will be reported to Planning Committee for consideration prior to publication for public consultation, and
 - 3) Noted that the Local Plan Preferred Options document will be subject to final approval by the National Park Authority.

ITEM 6: PREFERRED OPTIONS LOCAL PLAN: LANDSCAPE AND DARK NIGHT SKIES POLICIES

726. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC38/15) and update sheet.
727. The Director of Planning thanked Members for their previous endorsement of the draft policies, and reminded the Committee that they were being asked to focus their considerations on the wording of the policies rather than the supporting text.
728. The Committee commented:
- Their support in principle for the preferred options policies which appeared very comprehensive, and focused on issues that were important to the National Park.
 - The complexity of including more comprehensive cross referencing to other relevant policies and studies and avoiding contradiction.
 - The importance of a strong policy basis against which to base responses to major developments such as highway improvements outside the National Park boundary.
 - With regard to SD5 Landscape Character:
 - Whether the policy could be named ‘Landscape Character and Design’ as some of the wording related to landscape design issues.
 - There was a separate design policy, and the policy name should remain ‘Landscape Character’.
 - The need to avoid duplication of the Design policy within the Landscape Character policy, and whether criteria 1 b) and d) could be reworded.
 - The importance of ensuring the policy covered urban as well as rural development.
 - The need to include reference to Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs) and the latest guidelines from Natural England on Landscape Character, as weight was given to these by Planning Inspectors.
 - The importance of ensuring that screening would not be used to mitigate poor design.
 - The difficulty in defining native species, and that some native species were not appropriate in this landscape area.
 - Exotic species could be more appropriate in urban and garden landscape settings.

- The risk that Criteria 2 could be misinterpreted as: development would be sought for these sites in order to restore habitat.
- With regard to SD6 Safeguarding Views:
 - The need for a strong policy basis against which to consider applications that posed a harmful impact on views.
 - The term ‘springline’ villages referred to villages on greensand terrace and the scarp foot.
- With regard to SD7 Relative Tranquillity:
 - The need to include the word ‘relative’ throughout the supporting text.
- With regard to SD8 Dark Night Skies:
 - Both Hampshire and West Sussex County Councils had replaced their street lighting which had made a major improvement to sky darkness, and the information from the CPRE 2007 Tranquillity Study may no longer be up to date.
 - The threat of light pollution from French doors, and from velux windows which were permitted development.
 - Paragraph 1.44 referred to lighting schemes that affected listed buildings and not the night sky.

729. In response to questions officers clarified:

- With regard to SD5 Landscape Character:
 - There was a clear relationship between the Landscape Character and Design policies, and reference would be made in the supporting text to strengthen and clarify this.
 - The policy would be assessed against the new Coastal policy and any duplication addressed.
 - Cross references to the Green Infrastructure policy would be included.
 - Reference to the emerging Built Form Landscape Character Study would be included in the first criteria.
 - Inclusion could be made of long term Management Plans to ensure landscape proposals could achieve design objectives.
 - The word ‘local landscape character assessments’ could be amended for clarity to reflect that these were community led.
 - Reference to the historic settlement landscape pattern and its heritage was an important point and could be integrated between criteria 1 c) and d)
 - Landscape Character Assessments were referred to in criteria 1), and could be added to paragraph 1.18.
 - The use of exotic species could provide valuable habitat, and could be more appropriate than native species in some circumstances.
 - Efforts to bring in policies around native planting had proved difficult to implement elsewhere, and the impact of climate change and disease on native species such as ash and chestnut that had been observed in the South East.
 - The wording in criteria 1 d) could be amended to read ‘~~Where~~ screening planting is ~~desirable~~ it should be consistent with local ~~hedgerow and woodland~~ character’
 - The word ‘overriding’ could be removed from criteria 1 d) to read ‘New planting should be native species unless there are ~~overriding~~ appropriate reasons to select exotic species.
 - There was no intention to include minerals and waste sites such as quarries in the landscapes referred to in Criteria 2.
 - Criteria 2 landscapes could include land adjacent to degraded SNCI sites where developments could include enhancements to habitat.
 - Criteria 2 would be reworded to ‘the restoration of landscapes where ~~both~~ either natural ~~and~~ or cultural heritage features have been lost or degraded will be sought through development.

- With regard to SD6 Safeguarding Views:
 - Detailed evidence was normally included in the supporting text and general principles, patterns or types referred to in policies.
 - The Viewshed Study identified 60-70 iconic landmark views which had been cross referenced with suggestions received through public consultation, and was not considered to be exclusive.
 - Landscape Character Assessments could be added to paragraph 1.33, and to the wording in the evidence list at the end of the policy.
 - Cross referencing to the Design policy would be included in paragraph 1.21 to help safeguard against poor design.
- With regard to SD8 Dark Night Skies:
 - The word '*proposals*' would be amended to '*policies*'.
 - The wording of the policy could be broken up for clarity.
 - Further clarification of the terms used would be made in the supporting text, and the terms would be included in the glossary currently being drafted.
 - It was appropriate to include reference to the CPRE 2007 Tranquillity Study as this demonstrated an increase in light pollution from 2000, and the emerging SDNPA Dark Skies map would provide up to date evidence.
 - All development applications were now encouraged to have regard to the type of lighting proposed, and in some circumstances lighting proposals were considered permitted development.
 - Lighting on existing properties could not be addressed retrospectively through planning policy.
 - This was a ground-breaking and largely reactive policy, and a more proactive ambition to seek retrofitting of bulbs and downglow could prove challenging and costly to implement.

730. It was proposed and seconded to vote on the officer's recommendation. Following a vote, the proposal was carried.

731. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee:

- 1) Endorsed the direction of the draft policies as detailed in Appendix 1 of Report PC38/15 for inclusion in the draft Local Plan Preferred Options document, subject to the comments made by the Planning Committee being addressed.
- 2) Noted that the draft Local Plan Preferred Options document will be reported to Planning Committee for consideration prior to publication for public consultation, and
- 3) Noted that the Local Plan Preferred Options document will be subject to final approval by the National Park Authority

732. The Chair adjourned the meeting at 11.40pm.

733. The meeting reconvened at 11:50pm.

ITEM 7: PREFERRED OPTIONS LOCAL PLAN: SPATIAL PORTRAIT, VISION, OBJECTIVES AND SPATIAL STRATEGY

734. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC39/15) and update sheet.

735. The Planning Policy officer requested feedback from the Committee with regard to options for structure of Chapters 2, 3 and 4, and advised that Members could send any detailed comments on the Chapter 2, 3 and/or Introductory text for Policies SD4a-e to her after the meeting.

736. The Committee commented:

- Their enthusiasm for the innovative policies in this section of the Local Plan, which were landscape led and incorporated Ecosystems Services.

- The innovative East-West concept that echoed the creation of the National Park, and complemented the more historical North-South split dominated by administrative boundaries.
- The options for structure of Chapters 2, 3 and 4 could be more easily considered when the document was presented as a whole.
- With regard to Chapter 2 Spatial Portrait:
 - The policy exemplified the SDNPA's innovative approach to the Local Plan, and required a more inspiring introduction.
 - The wording developed for the Shared Identity reflecting the visual projection of the landscape could be woven into the policy wording to render it more compelling.
 - More reference could be made to the landscape-led nature of the policy to demonstrate why land within the National Park should be treated so differently.
 - The East-West concept could be strengthened.
- With regard to Chapter 4 Draft Spatial Strategy
 - The need for precise wording and clarity with regard to development in the countryside and what was being enabled/allowed.
 - Whether the word '*namely*' could be removed from paragraph 1.20
 - Repetition of 1) in policies SD4a)-e) had been considered important at the recent South Downs Partnership meeting, as the Broad Areas could be considered in isolation.
 - The need to cross reference the sub policies a) to e) with the Landscape Character and Design policies to reflect urban design and development in urban areas, and whether reference could be made to the emerging Built Form Landscape Character Study.

737. In response to questions officers clarified:

- With regard to Chapter 2 Spatial Portrait:
 - Paragraph 1.9 would be corrected to reflect 159 National Landscape Character Areas.
- With regard to Chapter 4 Draft Spatial Strategy
 - Development of the policy had required the definition of great estates, and the list in paragraph 1.20 could be added to, or the wording made more general so as to not exclude or be definitive.
 - Reference to Steep & Greatham would be included in the subsequent Spatial policies.
 - Inclusion of Upham, Milland and Slindon in the list of settlements could be subject to consideration.
 - Views expressed at the recent South Downs Partnership meeting were in favour of the wider implementation of management plans that were not only applicable to great estates but also to country and large family estates.
 - An estate's management plan could include planned works for the next 15 years with regard to built form, Higher Level Stewardship and public engagement, and could help ensure a more holistic approach to development.
 - Extensive consultation with individuals and parish meetings had already been carried out with regard to the Local Plan issues and options, and would be continuing.
 - A list of Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) sites had been sent to Parish Councils prior to consideration by the Committee.
 - Officers would welcome other suggestions for the term '*Broad Areas*'.
 - Further work would be undertaken with regard to the details of the Spatial plan with regard to defining the Broad Areas.
 - Reference would be made to SD5 Landscape Character and SD10 Design Policy within the Spatial policies in order to clarify the requirement for developments to

demonstrate high quality design that relates to the quality of the surrounding landscape.

738. It was proposed and seconded to vote on the officer's recommendation. Following a vote, the proposal was carried.

739. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee:

- 1) Endorsed the direction of the draft policies as detailed in Appendix I of Report PC39/15 for inclusion in the draft Local Plan Preferred Options document, subject to the comments made by the Planning Committee being addressed.
- 2) Noted that the draft Local Plan Preferred Options document will be reported to Planning Committee for consideration prior to publication for public consultation, and
- 3) Noted that the Local Plan Preferred Options document will be subject to final approval by the National Park Authority

ITEM 8: PREFERRED OPTIONS LOCAL PLAN: HOUSING POLICY

740. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC40/15) and update sheet.

741. The Committee commented:

- Whether the provision of around 4,500 additional homes could align with the National Park's duty to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage.
- Whether close examination of the National Park landscape criteria had been considered when the housing numbers were allocated.
- The existing population pressure in the National Park, and the cumulative effect of 4,433 additional homes.
- The importance of ensuring development did not encroach into the countryside.
- The National Park had a duty to foster the economic and social well being of local communities, including the provision of housing.
- Their sympathy for communities with established housing needs.
- Whether the housing levels reflected the objectively assessed need for housing.
- The location of the 765 windfall developments.
- The strategic housing allocations had been put forwards by the existing Joint Core Strategies, and approved by Planning Inspectors.
- The housing levels were conservative compared to adjacent areas outside the National Park.
- The proposed housing levels were a means of securing 1800 affordable homes.
- Their concerns regarding the wording 'required to accommodate' given that identified SHLAA sites could fall, and replacement sites could impact on the landscape.
- Whether the policy could limit the size of dwellings, and additions to dwellings that could render them unaffordable.
- National legislation could override Local Plans.

742. In response to questions officers clarified:

- The existing Joint Core Strategies had been considered in depth by the SDNPA and Planning Inspectors, and guided by national legislation and guidance including the Town & Country Planning Act, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Defra Circular 2010 on National Parks.
- The Government's Chief Planner and Chief Planning Inspector had welcomed the SDNPA's commitment to development of the Joint Core Strategies that took the National Park designation into account.
- The Joint Core Strategies had effectively managed new development through the National Park's Purposes and landscape designation.

- Rather than follow a settlement hierarchy approach, the Partnership Management Plan Issues and Options consultation had taken into account the wishes of communities regarding housing needs, resulting in a more dispersed approach.
- The Local Plan would be subject to further consultation which would confirm whether high quality growth with a bias towards affordable housing, that conserved the landscape and those living within it, was the most suitable approach.
- The housing levels had been put forward based on evidence from communities and Parishes, the broad spatial pattern of existing development Joint Core Strategy allocations in principle, and an assessment against various criteria.
- The proposed SHLAA sites had been scrutinised by the Landscape Officer against emerging and established landscape analysis.
- Following publication of the Local Plan for consultation, further work would be undertaken to assess whether those sites currently identified as having potential remained deliverable and free from constraints.
- Steep and Froxfield had no SHLAA sites identified however additional housing required testing and could be considered for inclusion on the list of settlements.
- The draft Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) identified housing mix by number of bedrooms, which would be the evidence base used for interpretation in the inspector's examination.
- Policies relating to Minimum Space Standards elsewhere had not passed inspection to date.
- Provision of affordable housing could be required of developments of 11 or more dwellings, whereas developments of 10 or less dwellings could only be required to make a financial contribution towards affordable housing.
- The 'in perpetuity' clause for affordable housing was detailed in the Affordable Housing policy and could be secured through the legal system.
- Any right to buy clause would be heavily caveated, and subject to any future reviews of the Local Plan.

743. It was proposed and seconded to vote on the officer's recommendation. Following a vote, the proposal was carried.

744. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee:

- 1) Endorsed the direction of the draft policy as detailed in Appendix I of Report PC40/15 for inclusion in the draft Local Plan Preferred Options document, subject to the comments made by the Planning Committee being addressed.
- 2) Noted that the draft Local Plan Preferred Options document will be reported to Planning Committee for consideration prior to publication for public consultation, and
- 3) Noted that the Local Plan Preferred Options document will be subject to final approval by the National Park Authority.

745. Committee Member David Jenkins left the meeting at 1:10pm.

ITEM 9: PREFERRED OPTIONS LOCAL PLAN: DESIGN POLICY

746. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC41/15) and update sheet.

747. The Committee commented:

- The importance of including landscape design, and on-going management to deliver design objectives.
- The need to address climate change as a key area in criteria 1 a) and for design to reflect resilience and adaptability in all its aspects, in addition to mitigating climate change.
- Whether 1 c) could refer to design or development briefs that could include more detail than a master plan.

- The importance of detailing how design could enhance security to reduce incidents of crime.
- The importance of referencing Green Infrastructure with regard to the installation of renewable energy and water management, and an emphasis on the need for landscape to be functional.
- Village Design Statements could be given more weight within the policy, and would assure community planning groups that community led plans would be supported by planning policy.
- The importance of robust wording within the policy to ensure this could not be misinterpreted in a way that would allow undesirable development.
- The need to strengthen the wording of paragraph 13 to reflect that whilst the SDNPA did not require new development to slavishly copy past styles, it should be required to preserve and enhance the existing character and appearance where its preservation is desirable.
- Whether the policy could be worded more ambitiously to achieve development that stood out in the National Park as being of the highest quality design.
- The word '*sustainable*' could be replaced by '*sustainability*' in criteria 1)

748. In response to questions officers clarified:

- Policies SD10 Design and SD5 Landscape Character would be redrafted to address any overlap issues, and consideration given as to whether SD5 criteria 1 a)-d) would sit better within the supporting text of SD10.
- Reference could be made to climate change and sustainable construction.
- Master plans were more appropriate to large strategic sites, and the supporting text could be expanded to include details of what would be required in a design brief.
- Master plans related to the management of developments in the future, and reference could be made to these in SD5 with regard to good future management of the landscape, and in SD10 to the good future management of structures, lighting etc.
- Green infrastructure criteria relating to landscaping could be included in more detail.
- The policy could include reference to climate change, and the adaptability and uses of buildings in a wider context.
- Consideration of security issues related to the increasingly important concept of health & wellbeing and liveability in public realm development.
- The Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) could include reference to health & wellbeing.
- The Listed Building and Conservation policy SD38 covered the enhancement and preservation of existing character and appearance and SD10 covered design in its general format.
- Consideration would be given to the role of the Design Review Panel.
- Wording would be included in the policy having regard to local community plans, in particular Local Landscape Character Assessments, Village Design Statements and Neighbourhood Plans.

749. It was proposed and seconded to vote on the officer's recommendation. Following a vote, the proposal was carried.

750. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee:

- 1) Endorsed the direction of the draft policy as detailed in Appendix 1 of Report PC41/15 for inclusion in the draft Local Plan Preferred Options document, subject to the comments made by the Planning Committee being addressed.
- 2) Noted that the draft Local Plan Preferred Options document will be reported to Planning Committee for consideration prior to publication for public consultation, and
- 3) Noted that the Local Plan Preferred Options document will be subject to final approval by the National Park Authority

Chair

751. The meeting closed at 1.40pm.