

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Held at: 10.00am on 10 July 2025 at The Memorial Hall, South Downs Centre.

Present: Heather Baker (Chair), Alun Alesbury, Paul Bevan, Tim Burr, Antonia Cox, Debbie Curnow-Ford, Janet Duncton, Joan Grech, Stephen McAuliffe, Robert Mocatta, Andrew Shaxson and Daniel Stewart-Roberts.

Officers: Tim Slaney (Director of Planning), Robert Ainslie (Development Manager), Rebecca Moutrey (Senior Solicitor), Claire Tester (Planning Policy Manager), Robert Campbell (Senior Planning Enforcement Officer), Robert Green (Major Planning Projects and Performance Manager) Sarah Round (Principal Planning Officer), Philippa Smyth (Principal Planning Officer), Samuel Whitehouse (Monitoring and Enforcement Officer) Stella New (Development Management Lead), Kelly Porter (Major Projects Lead), Richard Ferguson (Development Management Lead), Amy Tyler-Jones (Planning Policy Lead), Katharine Stuart (Planning Policy Lead), Richard Fryer (Senior Governance Officer) and Jane Roberts (Governance Officer).

OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting and informed those present that South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) Members had a primary responsibility for ensuring that the Authority furthered the National Park Purposes and Duty. That Members regarded themselves first and foremost as Members of the Authority and would act in the best interests of the National Park as a whole, rather than as representatives of their appointing body or any interest groups. The Chair welcomed two new Members to the Committee, Tim Burr and Joan Grech.

ITEM 1: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Apologies for absence were received from Gary Marsh and John Hyland.

ITEM 2: DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

2. The following declarations was made:

- Robert Mocatta declared a public service interest in Agenda Items 7, 8, 9 and 10 as an East Hampshire District councillor, and was acquainted with one of the public speakers for Agenda Item 6, Cllr Bill Moulard, who was an East Hampshire District Councillor.
- Debbie Curnow-Ford declared a public service interest in Agenda Items 7, 8, 9 and 10 as a Hampshire County Councillor, and Agenda Item 6 as a Bramshott and Liphook Parish Councillor.
- Daniel Stewart-Roberts declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 12 as the applicant was Lewes District Council and he was a Lewes District Councillor. He would withdraw from the meeting for item 12.
- Stephen McAuliffe declared a public service interest in Agenda Item 6 due to his relationship with the Forestry Commission and a pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 11. He would withdraw from the meeting for item 11.
- Alun Alesbury declared a public service interest in Agenda Item 11 as he was socially acquainted with one of the public speakers, Emily Mott.

ITEM 3: MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 8 MAY 2025

3. The minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 May 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

ITEM 4: UPDATES ON PREVIOUS COMMITTEE DECISIONS

4. The following updates were given by the Development Manager:

- SDNP/21/03905/FUL Square Field, Littlecote, Petworth: A decision had been issued on 30 May 2025.
- SDNP/24/03470/REM Lodge Hill Education Centre: A decision had been issued on 27 May 2025.
- SDNP/24/01907/REM Buckmore Farm, Petersfield: A decision had been issued on 13 June 2025.
- SDNP/24/03470/FUL Lancing College: A decision had been issued 14 May 2025.
- SDNP/24/05303/FUL Matterley Farm: A decision had been issued on 30 June 2025. A Section 106 agreement had been secured and although Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) could not be secured due to the limited length of the permission, mitigations and enhancements were achieved through the S106 agreement. The S106 agreement and the BNG landscape ecology mitigation management plan were available to view online.
- SDNP/23/00526/OUT – North Street Industrial Estate North Street Lewes: The previously issued decision had now been quashed and a corrected decision was expected to be issued in the coming weeks.

5. Members commented:

- SDNP/24/05303/FUL Matterley Farm: It was noted that the application had not referenced the Hampshire Nature Recovery Strategy, which was available now in draft form. Members expressed concern that the application had been presented to the Committee for a decision without a Biodiversity Landscape and Ecology Mitigation and Management Plan (BLEMMP) and requested that a timetable for submission be agreed for the next application.

ITEM 5: URGENT ITEMS

6. There were none.

ITEM 6: SDNP/24/01695/FUL- IRON HILL, FERNHURST

7. The Officer presented the application and reminded Members of the report (Report PC25/26-01) and the update sheet.
8. The following speakers addressed the committee against the application:
- Simon Catford, representing South and East Liphook Residents Group.
 - Richard Beynon, representing South and East Liphook Residents Group.
 - Cllr Bill Moulard, East Hampshire District Council, Bramshott and Liphook Ward.
9. The following speakers addressed the committee in support of the application:
- Nigel Jarvis, the Agent representing the applicant.
10. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC25/26-01), the updates and the public speaker comments and commented as follows:
- Questions were raised as to whether planning permission was required, noting that the site was already used for recreation and forestry. It was suggested that many of the proposed works, such as fencing and signage, could potentially fall under permitted development. The designation of the site as a Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG) did not appear to necessitate planning permission regarding any material change of use.
 - Concerns were raised about accessibility, particularly for those with mobility issues. Clarification was sought whether the proposed kissing gate and paths would accommodate wheelchairs and pushchairs.

Agenda Item 3

- Clarification was sought how the proposal would effectively mitigate recreational pressure on the Wealden Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA), given that access to the SPA would not be restricted.
- The lack of a public right of way from Chitley Lane was highlighted. It was observed that the access road was narrow, lacked footpaths, and was unsafe for pedestrians or cyclists.
- It was noted that the site was already heavily used for recreation. Questions were raised as to whether the proposal represented a material change of use or simply formalised existing activities.
- Concerns were expressed that the proposed circular walk could fragment habitats and negatively impact biodiversity.
- The site had been part of the Heathlands Reunited Scheme, through Forestry England, for several years but remained in poor condition.
- Questioned whether enhancements proposed under the application could be counted toward Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) if they were already part of existing management plans and existing heathland
- The ability to let dogs off leads would conflict with making the site nature friendly.
- The scale of the SANG was questioned. It was observed that Natural England's guidance required only 1.3 hectares for the associated development and expressed concern that the 34-hectare designation could facilitate extensive future housing development outside the National Park. Details of Natural England's criteria for size of SANG were requested.
- The car park was described as frequently full. Concerns were raised that formalising the site could increase visitor numbers, but if the car park was already full it would be unable to accommodate any extra visitors.
- The fencing required by Natural England for a SANG was considered by some Members to be unnecessary and potentially detrimental to the site's character. It was noted that Forestry England had permitted development rights to erect fencing.
- Discussion took place as to whether the proposal aligned with the National Park's statutory purposes, particularly in terms of conserving natural beauty and wildlife. Some were of the opinion that the formalisation of the site conflicted with these aims.
- The site already had access in perpetuity as it was public forestry estate.
- The financial contribution of £150,000 for monitoring over 80 years was queried. Clarification was sought on how the figure was calculated and whether it was proportionate.

11. Members were advised:

- Planning permission was required due to the totality of the use of the land into a formal SANG and the cumulative proposed infrastructure. While forestry operations and informal recreation were permitted, the installation of gates, fencing, and way markers constituted development.
- The SANG was intended to provide the public with an alternative site similar in character to Wealden Heaths. There were no plans to restrict access to the SPA, access would remain and the use of SANG was about encouraging alternative(s) places for recreation.
- Whilst there was no footpath directly to the site and the access road was narrow and lacked pavements, the site was a very short drive for Liphook residents and the Highways Authority had not raised an objection.

- The proposal included a 15% improvement in BNG to satisfy mandatory BNG requirements, which had been accepted by the County Ecologist. The enhancements were considered additional and valid under the BNG metric.
- The application was to be considered on its own merits. While the SANG may theoretically support mitigation for future developments, any such use would require separate planning consideration.
- The long-term management of the site would be secured through a Section 106 agreement, with monitoring over 80 years.
- The £150,000 contribution represented the Authority's cost recovery for monitoring and ensuring delivery of the SANG over the 80-year period.
- Officers were of the opinion that the proposal aligned with the National Park's purposes and duties and would secure long-term ecological and recreational benefits.
- Natural England's guidelines were that 8 hectares per 1,000 of population was a general guide to providing new SANG. Their guidance also outlined a 2.5km circular walk should be provided within a SANG.

12. RESOLVED:

- 1) That planning permission be granted subject to the completion of:
 - i) A S106 Legal Agreement, the final form of wording for which is delegated to the Director of Planning to secure:
 - The use of the site as a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), for the purpose of mitigating new residential development within the proximity of the Wealden Heaths Special Protection Area.
 - SANG and BNG Management Plan (the final form of wording to be delegated to Director of Planning) to secure the delivery of infrastructure (capital works) and future management and monitoring of the site in perpetuity (80 years);
 - Financial contribution of £150,000 (or amended figure to be agreed with the Applicant) towards the Authority's monitoring of the site in perpetuity (80 years).
 - ii) The conditions set out at paragraph 9.2 of the report and any amendments or other conditions, as required.
- 2) That authority be delegated to the Director of Planning to refuse the application, with appropriate reasons, if the Legal Agreement is not completed within six months of the 10 July 2025 planning committee meeting

ITEM 7: SDNP/24/05322/FUL - BLACKNEST GOLF CENTRE, BINSTED

13. The Officer presented the application and reminded Members of the report (Report PC25/26-02) and the update sheet.
14. The following speakers addressed the committee in support of the application:
 - Rachael Russell, representing herself.
 - Chantal Foo, from Lawson Architecture Limited representing 360 Beech Limited
 - Toby Diggins, from Digg & Co, landscape and ecology consultants, representing 360 Beech Limited.
15. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC25/26-0), the updates and the public speaker comments and commented as follows:
 - Welcomed the positive commentary on the design and felt that the scheme would benefit the local economy and aligned well with the Parks purposes.

- The inclusion of padel and pickleball courts was welcomed, particularly that they were enclosed, which would help mitigate noise and visual impact.
- Appreciation was expressed at the multi-use nature of the site, which blended leisure, ecology, and hospitality in a cohesive and sustainable manner.
- Questions were raised regarding the proximity of the development to ancient woodland. Clarification was sought as to whether the standard 15-metre buffer had been applied and whether Natural England had been consulted.
- Concerns were expressed about the reduction in car parking spaces. It was observed that while the golf course was being reduced in size, the addition of new facilities could increase demand, and insufficient parking could lead to operational issues
- The choice of flat roofs on the proposed eco-cabins was queried, with some Members questioning whether this was an appropriate design choice given the local climate and potential drainage issues.
- Clarification was sought on the lighting associated with the padel courts, particularly the hours of operation and the potential for light pollution.

16. Members were advised:

- The applicant had incorporated a 15-metre buffer to the ancient woodland and included management measures to prevent guests and their dogs from entering sensitive areas. Natural England had been consulted and had raised no objections.
- A transport assessment had been submitted and reviewed by HCC, who confirmed that the proposed parking provision was sufficient for the proposed usage. The applicant would be required to provide information on sustainable transport links, including those to Farnham and Bentley stations, to future occupants as part of a condition.
- The padel courts would operate between 8:00am and 8:30pm. A condition had been included requiring an updated lighting strategy. The courts would feature a low-transmittance band around the base to minimise sky glow and light spill.
- The eco-cabins were designed with sustainability in mind. The flat roofs were part of a contemporary design approach and would be constructed with appropriate drainage and insulation systems.

17. **RESOLVED:**

- 1) It is recommended that Planning Permission be granted subject to:
 - i) A Section 106 Agreement, the final form of which is delegated to the Director of Planning, in consultation with the Chairman of the Planning Committee, to secure
 - a. Biodiversity Net Gain Plan to secure a minimum of 16% net gain in habitat units and a minimum 18% net gain in watercourse units as set out within the Ecological Statement and a Monitoring Fee of £35,000
 - ii) The conditions as set out at Section 9 and the update sheet.
- 2) That authority be delegated to the Director of Planning to make minor amendments to conditions pursuant to ii above as required, subject to the resolution of the s106 agreement.
- 3) That authority be delegated to the Director of Planning to refuse Planning Permission, with appropriate reasons, if the legal agreement is not completed, or insufficient progress made, within six months of the 10 July 2025 Planning Committee meeting

18. Committee broke for a comfort break 11.52.

ITEM 8: SDNP/24/03657/FUL - LAND EAST OF PULENS LANE, SHEET

19. The Officer presented the application and reminded Members of the report (Report PC25/26-03) and the update sheet.

20. The following speaker addressed the committee against the application:
 - Robin Forrest, representing himself and neighbours.
 - John Stockings, representing himself.
21. The following speakers addressed the committee in support of the application:
 - Luke Smith, Planning Agent, speaking on behalf of the applicant
22. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC25/26-02), the updates and the public speaker comments and commented as follows:
 - Noted that the application was for an allocated site.
 - Concerns were expressed concern about the safety of the proposed access onto Pulens Lane, particularly given the narrow width of the road and the volume of traffic. It was noted that access would be located between two existing properties. Members sought reassurance that the Highways Authority had fulfilled due diligence on the matter. Questions were raised around responsibility for hedge cutting on the proposed access.
 - Questions were raised about the drainage strategy. Clarification was sought as to whether the proposed system constituted a sustainable drainage system (SuDS) or merely a conventional drainage solution. It was noted that the engineering drawings appeared inconsistent with the landscape and BNG reports. A preference for wider ground water monitoring, with a pre commencement condition, was expressed with the final scheme to be agreed with the SDNPA and lead local flood authority.
 - Attention was drawn to the importance of ensuring that the drainage system included treatment features to remove pollutants before discharge into the River Rother. It was noted that the site would generate urban runoff, and that policy SD17 required development to improve or enhance water quality.
 - The separation of the site into two planning applications was questioned. Clarification was sought as to why the two halves of the allocated site were not being considered together, and whether this approach undermined the delivery of affordable housing and infrastructure.
 - Concerns were raised about the proposed public right of way (PROW) through the site. It was observed that policy SD85 required a pedestrian and cycle route through the entire allocation and Members questioned whether the proposed bridleway designation was appropriate.
 - Clarification was sought the absence of photovoltaic (PV) panels in the submitted illustrations and Members asked whether these would be integrated into the building design.
 - The potential for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding to support a bridge over the River Rother was discussed. It was observed that the proposed footpath would terminate at the riverbank, with no means of crossing to the adjacent nature reserve. Members were of the opinion that the footpath should be retained to allow future connection to the wider active travel network.
 - The impact on neighbouring properties was considered. It was observed that the proposed development would be located at a significant distance from existing dwellings, and that the layout had been designed to minimise overlooking and loss of privacy.
 - The maintenance of the swales and drainage infrastructure was raised. Clarification was sought as to whether the landscape management plan would include provisions for long-term maintenance of these features.
 - Noted that the images supplied by the applicant, whilst attractive, were illustrative and might not match the final design. Members expressed a preference that applications were brought forward after these issues had been agreed, rather than requiring them to be resolved by condition.

23. Members were advised:

- The proposed access had been subject to detailed assessment by HCC Highways, who raised no objections. The access would include a dropped kerb and visibility splays, and the footpath width had been reviewed and deemed acceptable. Highways Authority were responsible for ensuring visibility splays were clear and right of access was conditioned.
- The drainage strategy included natural filtration through swales and an attenuation pond before discharge into the River Rother. A condition required the submission of a final drainage strategy, including treatment measures and groundwater monitoring.
- The site allocation was in two separate land ownerships, which necessitated two separate planning applications. Officers confirmed that the full affordable housing requirement would be delivered across both applications, and that the applications had been coordinated to ensure policy compliance.
- The proposed PROW would be secured through a Section 106 agreement. HCC had no objection with the proposed route. Officers confirmed that the term “bridleway” was used in error and would be corrected to “footpath and cycle route.”
- PV panels would be installed on the roofs of the dwellings and garages and would be set at a 35° degree angle. A condition required the submission of a sustainability strategy detailing all energy efficiency measures.
- The Section 106 agreement would secure the footpath through the site and allow for a connection in the future. Officers would communicate with Petersfield Town Council regarding a potential connection to the Tilmore Brook footpath. It was considered important to secure the PROW through the site to the point where land ownership changed as this would enable the potential for connection and possibly a bridge (if this was considered ecologically appropriate) was secured.
- The landscape management plan would include provisions for the maintenance of swales and drainage infrastructure. Conditions had been included to secure long-term management and monitoring.
- Conditions should be used to manage or overcome concerns where possible, rather than refuse a proposal.

24. **RESOLVED:**

That planning permission be granted subject to:

- 1) The satisfactory completion of a S106 agreement, the final form of which is to be delegated to the Director of Planning, in consultation with the Chair of the Planning committee to secure:
 - 8 Affordable Housing Units as set out in the report which will either be of a shared ownership/discount market sale tenure or social rented/shared ownership tenure
 - £55,779 financial contribution towards the provision of affordable housing in the South Downs National Park.
 - The creation and dedication of a footpath and cyclepath across the site as set out in the report.
 - Financial contribution of £62,962 towards the Pulens Lane Improvements Plan
 - Public open space management scheme
 - Biodiversity Net Gain Plan and Monitoring Fee of £35,000

- ii. The conditions set out at Paragraph 9.1 of the report and any amendments or other conditions required to address technical matters.
- 2) That authority be delegated to the Director of Planning to refuse Planning Permission, with appropriate reasons, if the legal agreement is not completed, or insufficient progress made, within six months of the 10 July 2025 Planning Committee meeting

ITEM 9: SDNP/24/03715/FUL - LAND SOUTH OF 22 PULENS LANE, SHEET

25. The Officer presented the application and reminded Members of the report (Report PC25/26-04) and the update sheet.
26. The following speaker addressed the committee against the application:
 - Robin Forrest, representing himself and neighbours.
 - John Stockings, representing himself
27. The following speakers addressed the committee in support of the application:
 - Luke Smith, Planning Agent, speaking on behalf of the applicant.
28. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC25/26-04), the updates and the public speaker comments and commented as follows:
 - Questions were raised around timing of the traffic survey and whether it provided a full picture of traffic density.
 - The design of the dwellings was considered. It was observed that the buildings were contemporary in style and questioned whether the flat roofs and materials were appropriate for the location.
 - The proposed use of a package treatment plant for foul drainage was queried. Clarification was sought why the dwellings were not being connected to the main sewer system serving the adjacent development.
 - Discussion of the potential for traffic calming measures on Pulens Lane and whether the development would contribute to wider improvements in the area.
 - The use of green roofs and the potential for installing photovoltaic (PV) panels was raised. Clarification was sought on whether PV panels could be integrated into the green roof design.
29. Members were advised:
 - The traffic survey for the site had been conducted between 13–17 December 2024, during which Churcher’s College was closed. However, HCC Highways were aware of the timing, had reviewed the data and raised no objections.
 - No reason was provided as to why a separate foul drainage system was being used, but there were no objections to package treatment plant proposed by the Environment Agency or the lead local flood authority.
 - A traffic calming scheme for Pulens Lane was being developed by HCC, and there was a contribution to that from the related development on Land East of Pulens Road.
 - PV panels could be installed on green roofs, provided the correct planting and structural support were used. The applicant had indicated that PV panels would be included as part of the sustainability strategy.
30. **RESOLVED:**
 - 1) That planning permission be granted subject to:
 - i. The satisfactory completion of a S106 agreement to secure:

- £111,558 financial contribution equivalent to 1 unit to be used towards the provision of affordable housing in the South Downs National Park as set out in the report.
- 2) The conditions set out at Paragraph 9.1 of the report and any amendments or other conditions required to address technical matters.
 - 3) That authority be delegated to the Director of Planning to refuse Planning Permission, with appropriate reasons, if the legal agreement is not completed, or insufficient progress made, within six months of the 10 July 2025 Planning Committee meeting

ITEM 10: SDNP/24/03248/FUL - LAND SOUTH OF CLEMENTS CLOSE, BINSTED

31. The Officer presented the application and reminded Members of the report (Report PC25/26-05) and provided a verbal update to confirm that the habitat regulations assessment had been carried out and that Natural England had been consulted.
32. The following speakers addressed the committee in support of the application:
 - Jack Higson, the Agent representing the Applicant, Priory Investment Group.
33. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC25/26-05), the updates and the public speaker comments and commented as follows:
 - Clarification was sought on how the Authority was addressing the issue of housing associations being unwilling to take on small numbers of affordable housing units. It was noted that this had been a recurring issue on rural sites and could affect delivery.
 - A question was raised as to whether an off-site contribution in lieu of on-site affordable housing had been considered, particularly given the small scale of the development.
 - Clarification was sought regarding the Highways Authority's position. It was observed that the report stated "no objection subject to conditions," but the original consultation response had recommended a holding objection.
 - Clarification was sought whether the proposed drainage strategy, which involved discharging surface water to the foul sewer, was compliant with policy SD50, and whether it would result in a net increase in surface water runoff.
 - Concerns were raised about the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) strategy. Clarification was sought whether a metric had been submitted and whether the BNG units being purchased off-site were based on an appropriate baseline, particularly given the site's overgrown condition.
34. Members were advised:
 - The Authority was actively working to widen the pool of potential affordable housing providers, including community land trusts and rural housing associations. Officers were also engaging with Homes England to improve support for rural schemes.
 - While off-site contributions had been used on other sites, the policy position prioritised on-site delivery. In this case, three affordable units were proposed on-site, and this was considered policy compliant following a viability review.
 - The initial Highways response had recommended a holding objection, but following further submissions and clarification, HCC had confirmed no objection subject to conditions.
 - The proposed drainage strategy, which involved discharging to the foul sewer, had been accepted by Thames Water and the lead local flood authority due to poor infiltration rates on site. While not ideal, it was considered acceptable in this context and compliant with policy SD50.
 - A BNG metric had been submitted, and the off-site units would be secured through a Section 106 agreement. Officers confirmed that the baseline for the BNG credits would

be assessed in accordance with legislation, and that the overgrown nature of the site had been taken into account.

35. RESOLVED:

- 1) That planning permission be granted subject to:
 - i. The satisfactory completion of a Section 106 Agreement, the final form of which is delegated to the Director of Planning, in consultation with the Chair of the Planning Committee to secure:
 - 3 Affordable Homes as set out in the report;
 - Biodiversity Net Gain Plan, associated management and monitoring and Off-site Biodiversity Net Gain;
 - Rights of Way Contribution of £5000 towards:
 - the replacement of two stiles with accessible gates on Binsted Footpath 27, approximately 200 metres southwest of the development and accessible from it as part of a circular walking loop incorporating The Street and Binsted Footpaths 26, 27 and 28.
 - vegetation cutback on the surfaces of Binsted Footpaths 30b and 55, approximately 550-700 metres east of the site.
 - ii. The satisfactory consideration and resolution of a project level HRA relating to the impact on Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA.
 - iii. The conditions set out at paragraph 8.1 with authority delegated to the Director of Planning in consultation with the Chair of Planning Committee, for amendments to conditions so as to accommodate any necessary minor changes;
- 2) That authority be delegated to the Director of Planning to refuse the application with appropriate reasons if the Section 106 Agreement is not completed or sufficient progress has not been made within 6 months of the 10 July Planning Committee Meeting

36. The Committee adjourned for lunch 13:37.

37. Robert Mocatta left the meeting 13.27.

38. Stephen McAuliffe left the meeting 14.10

ITEM 11: SDNP/24/05114/FUL - SINGLETON OILFIELD, SINGLETON

39. The Officer presented the application and reminded Members of the report (Report PC25/26-06) and verbal update stating the correct boundary map was in the presentation, the one within the report was submitted in error.

40. The following speaker addressed the committee against the application:

- Philip Maber, representing himself as a neighbour.
- Emily Mott, representing Weald Action Group.

41. The following speakers addressed the committee in support of the application:

- Jonathan Rowlatt, representing the applicant, Star Energy Group PLC.

42. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC25/26-06), the updates and the public speaker comments and commented as follows:

- Members acknowledged that the proposal would reduce flaring by enabling the export of electricity generated from waste gas. They were of the opinion that it was better that some of the flared gas be used to generate electricity and be transferred to the National Grid.

- It was noted that while some disruption would occur during installation, the works would be temporary and the track would be reinstated.
- Questions were raised about the capacity of the national grid to accept the full output from the generators. Clarification was sought whether the proposed cable would be sufficient to export all electricity generated, or whether flaring would still be required.
- Concerns were expressed about the piecemeal nature of the applications related to the oilfield. It was observed that the cable, generators, and other infrastructure had been brought forward separately, and asked whether this approach circumvented the need for a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).
- The fire risk associated with the site was discussed. Clarification was sought as to whether the site had its own firefighting capability and how emergency access would be maintained during the cable installation.
- It was observed that the site had been operational for many years and questioned why the cable connection was only now being pursued, particularly given that the site was due for restoration by 2031.

43. Members were advised:

- The generators had been approved under a separate planning permission. The cable was originally intended to be installed by a statutory undertaker under permitted development rights. The current application sought permission for a private installation of the cable, which required full planning consent.
- The cable would be laid in sections along the access track, with each section reinstated at the end of the working day. This approach would minimise disruption and maintain access.
- The total generating capacity of the approved generators was 4.4 megawatts. The cable would allow for the export of up to 2 megawatts to the national grid. Flaring might still be required at times for operational reasons, such as during maintenance or start-up.
- The application had been screened for EIA, and it was concluded that an EIA was not required. The cumulative impacts of the cable and the generators had been considered.
- Officers were unaware as to whether the site had its own independent firefighting infrastructure and would rely on the local fire and rescue authority.

44. **RESOLVED:**

- 1) That planning permission be granted subject to the conditions set out in paragraph 8.1 of the report.

45. Stephen McAuliffe rejoined the meeting at 14:42

46. Daniel Stewart-Roberts left the meeting at 14.42

ITEM 12: SDNP/24/04066/FUL - GARAGE COMPOUND, THE LYNCHETS, LEWES

47. The Officer presented the application and reminded Members of the report (Report PC25/26-07) and the update sheet.

48. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC25/26-07), the updates and the public speaker comments and commented as follows:

- Support was expressed for the delivery of affordable housing, particularly family-sized units, and the use of modular construction to meet sustainability standards was welcomed.
- Concerns were raised about the use of recycled UPVC windows. Clarification was sought as to whether they would be visually consistent and durable.
- Further details on the landscaping were requested.

49. Members were advised:
- The UPVC windows and doors would be newly manufactured using 75% recycled materials. They were not reused units and would be consistent in appearance and performance.
 - Landscaping options were constrained as the site was currently a garage compound. The amenity space for the application were a courtyard style patio rather than green space.

50. **RESOLVED:**

- 1) That planning permission be granted subject completion of:
 - i. A Section 106 Legal Agreement, the final form of which is delegated to the Director of Planning to secure:
 - the 4no. dwellings as affordable rented or social rented housing (to be confirmed by the applicant), and;
 - the necessary purchase of 'off site' credits for Biodiversity Net Gain.
 - ii. The conditions set out at paragraph 9.2 of the report, update sheet and any amendments or other conditions, as required.
- 2) That the Committee confirm that they, in principle, support the 'Stopping Up' of the existing adopted highways under Sections 247 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990;
- 3) That authority be delegated to the Director of Planning to refuse the application with appropriate reasons if the agreement is not completed or sufficient progress has not been made in securing the agreement within 6 months of the 10 July 2025 Planning Committee meeting

51. Daniel Stewart-Roberts rejoined the meeting 14.54

ITEM 13: SDNP/24/03587/FUL - GARAGE COMPOUND, QUEENS ROAD, LEWES

52. This item was withdrawn from the agenda on 7 July 2025.

ITEM 14: SDNP/24/03583/FUL - GARAGE COMPOUND, KINGSLEY ROAD, LEWES

53. This item was withdrawn from the agenda on 7 July 2025.

ITEM 15: LOCAL PLAN REVIEW REPORT

54. The Officer reminded Members of the report (Report PC25/26-10).
55. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning report (Report PC25/26-10) and commented as follows:
- Clarification was sought on how the quarters aligned in Appendix 2.
 - Clarification was sought on the four-month delay when other changes were delayed by three months.
 - Key themes in regard to reuse or demolition of existing structures were discussed with consideration given to potential trade-offs between embodied carbon impact and architectural character.
56. Members were advised:
- The quarters in Appendix 2 were aligned with fiscal timings starting in April.
 - The four-month delay was to allow for the May election period.
 - The style of the County Hall Building was noted, and a balanced approach taken to embodied carbon and visual character.

57. **RESOLVED:**

- 1) Receive and consider the summary of feedback received through the Regulation 18 consultation on the Local Plan Review set out in Appendix 1.
- 2) Approve the revised Local Development Scheme in Appendix 2.

58. Debbie Curnow-Ford left the meeting at 3.15pm

ITEM 16: PLANNING REFORMS UPDATE

59. The Officer reminded Members of the report (Report PC25/26-11).

60. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning report (Report PC25/26-11).and commented as follows:

- Concern was expressed at the proposed reforms to planning committees, particularly the suggestion that Planning Committees should be limited to 11 Members. It was felt that this would be inappropriate for a large and diverse National Park such as the South Downs, where local knowledge and representation were essential to informed decision-making.
- Clarification was sought on the relaxation of the biodiversity gain hierarchy and the relationship between development and provision across the Park's boundaries.
- Members expressed concern at the removal of the protected species assessment, as without that data you could not know the impact of the development and mitigate accordingly.
- Concerns were raised about the effectiveness of the small-site BNG metric. The key issue was not necessarily the size of the development but the impact on the habitat, especially on a particularly valuable habitat.
- The exemption of medium-sized developments (up to 50 dwellings) from BNG requirements was strongly criticised. It was observed that such developments could occupy significant land areas and have substantial environmental impacts, and that exempting them from BNG obligations was inconsistent with the government's stated environmental objectives.

61. Members were advised:

- National Parks were currently exempt from the proposed restriction on the size of planning committees.
- The consultation response wording regarding BNG delivery was intended to prevent developments within the National Park from offsetting their biodiversity obligations outside its boundaries.
- The Authority had objected to the proposal to remove the protected species assessment.
- The Authority was, as far as possible, responding in line with other Protected Landscapes and National Parks England, opposing the exemption of medium-sized sites from BNG requirement, especially within the context of a National Park.
- The Authority had not challenged the existing BNG framework but had taken a strategic approach to influencing its refinement through coordinated responses.

62. **RESOLVED:**

- 1) Approved the proposed responses in Appendix 2; and
- 2) Noted the responses in Appendix 1 in respect of consultations where deadlines preceded Committee.

ITEM 17: ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

63. The Officer reminded Members of the report (Report PC25/26-12).

64. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning report (Report PC25/26-12) and commented as follows:
- Clarification was sought whether the enforcement cases listed in the report were solely those undertaken by the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA), or whether they also included cases handled by host authorities under delegated arrangements.
 - The Committee expressed appreciation for the work of the enforcement team and welcomed the proactive steps being taken.
 - Interest was expressed in obtaining comparative data from host authorities to assess how their enforcement performance aligned with that of the SDNPA.
 - A request was made for future reports to include analysis of how long enforcement cases typically took to resolve, and identification of trends.
 - It was noted that the Authority's current enforcement guide dated from 2014. Clarification was sought Concerns were raised about delays in decision-making by the Planning Inspectorate in enforcement appeal cases. Clarification was sought whether this was a widespread issue and how it was being managed.
65. Members were advised:
- The enforcement cases listed in the report were solely those carried out by the SDNPA.
 - Host authority performance was reported to the Policy and Resources Committee annually.
 - The current report did not include trend data on case resolution times, but Officers agreed that this would be a useful addition in future updates
 - The 2014 enforcement guide was scheduled for review and would be updated to reflect current best practice and legislative changes.
 - Officers continued to monitor appeal timelines and liaise with the Planning Inspectorate as needed.
66. **RESOLVED:** Noted the update on enforcement action.

ITEM 18: SUMMARY OF APPEAL DECISIONS FROM 24 JANUARY – 20 JUNE 2025

67. The Officer reminded Members of the report (Report PC25/26-13).
68. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning report (Report PC24/25-13) and commented as follows:
- Clarification was sought whether the Authority's planning policies were proving robust at appeal and whether recent decisions suggested a need to tighten or revise any specific policies.
 - The absence of representation from HCC Highways at a recent appeal hearing was noted. Clarification was sought on whether this was likely to have affected the outcome of the appeal.
 - The Committee discussed national trends in appeal outcomes.
 - Clarification was sought under what circumstances the appeal decision on Land at Whispers had been quashed.
69. Members were advised:
- The Authority's policies remained generally robust, but there was ongoing work to ensure that appeal statements clearly explained the rationale for site allocations, particularly in sensitive areas such as the A3 corridor.
 - Officers were of the opinion that the absence of HCC Highways at a recent appeal hearing had not materially affected the outcome of the decision.

Agenda Item 3

- While appeal outcomes could inform policy refinement, the Authority would take a measured approach and focus on strengthening policies where consistent issues had been identified.
- National trends indicated a decline in appeal success rates, which was consistent with the Authority's experience.
- Appeal rates falling was common in many authorities, the SDNPA trend this year was following the national trend, PINS were following the government policy.
- The Land at Whispers appeal decision had been quashed because the proposed development did not meet the legal definition of a dwelling house, as it lacked the necessary facilities.

70. **RESOLVED:** Noted the outcome of appeal decisions

71. The Chair closed the meeting at 3:43pm

CHAIR

Signed: _____

