

Report to	Planning Committee
Date	12 February 2026
By	Director of Placemaking
Title of Report	Summary of appeal decisions from 23 September 2025 – 20 January 2026
Purpose of Report	To update SDNPA Members on appeal decisions received

Recommendation:

The Committee is recommended to note the outcome of appeal decisions

I. Overview

- I.1 The attached table (**Appendix I**) provides a summary of the decisions ordered by date. This covers both those appeals dealt with by the host authorities and directly by the South Downs National Park Authority.
- I.2 From the 23 September 2025 to 20 January 2026:
 - 34 appeal decisions were received, of which 17 were dismissed, 16 were allowed and 1 was a split decision (partially allowed).
 - 6 applications for an award of costs were made against the Authority, 5 were refused and 1 was allowed.
- I.3 The Authority's appeal performance in the 2024 / 25 financial year was 84% dismissed.
- I.4 Up until the 20 January, ten months into the 2025 / 26 financial year, the Authority's appeal performance is 64% dismissed.
- I.5 The full list of appeal decisions is set out the Table (**Appendix I**), further details on some key decisions are provided below.
- I.6 Members will note from the Table the decisions for Ditchling Rugby Club and Hockley Golf Club (applications involving land re-profiling), both appeals were allowed. In relation to Ditchling Rugby Club, the Inspector concluded that whilst recognising the landscape harm caused by the proposal, that harm was ultimately outweighed by the social and community

benefits of the proposal (and all other matters of concern such as highway safety, ecology and flood risk could be adequately dealt with via conditions). For Hockley Golf Club, the Inspector concluded that there would be minor harm to the landscape character and scenic beauty of the area. However, that harm was outweighed by the sustainable management of water resources (for example the club's dependency upon potable water would be considerably reduced) and the proposal would bring economic and social benefits by protecting the longer-term viability of the golf club.

- I.7 Regarding the appeal, which was allowed together with an award of costs, this related to the creation of the MUGA (multi-use games area) at Newman Collard Playing Fields in Liss. This application was dealt with by East Hampshire District Council on behalf of the SDNPA. The main focus of the appeal was whether the proposal would result in the loss of an existing 9 v 9 football pitch. East Hampshire District Council's Playing Pitch Strategy (2024) indicated that such a facility (a 9 v 9 pitch) was on the site. Sports England also objected to the proposal due to the loss of the pitch as set out in the said strategy.
- I.8 Liss Parish Council (LPC), the custodian trustee of the land, confirmed that at the time the draft strategy was created in 2023, East Hampshire District Council were told that their information was incorrect. LPC also confirmed that the field is currently used for a 5 v 5 and a 7 v 7 sized pitches and that due to its limited size a 9 v 9 pitch could not be accommodated when the 5 v 5 and 7 v 7 are in use. This evidence was also supported by the local football club (Liss Athletic Football Club) who confirmed that 9 v 9 matches had not been played on the site for over 10 years.
- I.9 Therefore, due to facts and circumstances of the case, the Inspector concluded the creation of the MUGA would not result in the loss of an existing 9 v 9 pitch or have any unacceptable adverse impact on the existing facilities. In addition, the Inspector agreed to an award of costs as the Authority failed to engage with the applicant over the factual information regarding the (non) existence of the 9 v 9 pitch and the Authority's failure to base its decision on the existing situation and inaccurate assertions about the proposal's impact (and if they had the appeal could have been avoided).

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Appendices: I. Summary of Appeal Decisions

SDNPA Consultees: Director of Placemaking; Legal Services.