

South Downs Local Access Forum (SDLAF) – Meeting Notes

Date: Monday 1st December 2025

Time: 14:00 – 16:00

Location: South Downs Centre Hall, Midhurst, GU29 9DH

Attendees

LAF Members:

Paul Bevan (PB), Merovee Churton (MC), Richard Johnson (RJ), Doug Jones (Chair) (DJ), Roger Mullenger (RM), Chris Todd (CT), James Tulley (JT)

SDNPA Officers:

Ben Marsh (BM), Ashia Carter (AC)

Guests: None.

Apologies:

Lucy Austen, Robert Damper, Carolyn Fair, Sean Howell, Lipika Mandal, Andrew Shaxson, John Vannuffel

1. Welcome & Apologies

Paul Bevan was welcomed to LAF as a new SDNP member.
Apologies noted as above.

2. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Carry to next meeting due to not being quorate

3. Items for AOB

- LAF website
- Follow up letters to consultations LAF has responded to
- NPA meeting
- Year-end review

4. Notes and Actions from previous meeting

The following actions had been completed:

- 2024 Annual Report circulated to LAF members
- AG notified of any network projects to add to the future funding pipeline.
- BD shared example of New Forest Cycle Working Group coloured grid system
- AG contacted about interest in SDW Accessibility Awareness Challenge 2026 and shared with networks.

Carried over:

- BM to share ATNP map once completed

5. Devolution – Statement to Strategic Mayoral Authorities

Liaison with HCC LAF & NF LAF about a joint statement to prospective mayors to make sure they know about access. Could do a similar statement with WSCC LAF & ESCC LAF. Deadline end of Feb.

Action 1: DJ to liaise with other LAF's and draft statement.

6. South Downs National Park general update

DJ & BM provided a general update from the National Park Authority, making the following points:

Partnership Management Plan (PMP)

- Update of target 5.1A PLTOF Target 9: by 2031, 300km (10%) of the National Park's public Right's of Way network is in good condition and 'accessible' – the PMP steering group had said not demanding or ambitious enough. Also, the Target should separate 'good condition' and 'accessible'. These points had been considered by SDNPA but not taken forward.

Action 2: DJ to flag at NPA meeting on behalf of LAF.

Unable to check standard of RoW's currently due to Highways Authorities being unable to separate RoW's in National Park.

Active Travel Network Plan

- The ATNP will be going to the National Park Authority meeting on 09/12/25 for approval of stage 1; stage 2 is to go to Senior Leadership Team for approval. The LAF was thanked for inputs with creating the ATNP. This will become live once the framework has been formally signed off. The map is part of pipeline projects with digital map hopefully coming in February.

7. Consultations

BM provided an overview of the current consultations that the LAF had been asked to respond to, which included:

- Active Travel Routes in the Itchen Corridor
- Chyngton Brooks Intertidal Habitat Restoration
- St Swithun's Way National Trail Upgrade
- Progress following HCC Consultations: noted that advice from SDLAF and HCAF had not been identified in the report to the decision-making Executive Member

Action 3: BM to circulate consultation responses to all LAF members for approval.

8. LAF Terms of Reference

Carry to next meeting due to not being quorate

9. Matters for next meeting and LAF working groups

- Local Plan
- Digital ATNP map and live demo. Currently developing handout / presentation for use
- Future meetings likely to need to include Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution

Action 4: CT to circulate link to CWIS3.

Action 5: BM to check if results from SDLAF call for housing allocations in Local Plan to consider access opportunities

10. AOB

- Website out of date. To include Agendas & Minutes and Consultation Responses & Correspondence; but SDNPA Comms Team have been and will be busy for some time on PMP.

Action 6: BM to update website.

- Discussion about the idea of following up LAF consultation responses to see if any LAF advice was taken on board. Not agreed.
- Year-end review – any issues to be included to be sent to BM / DJ
- At the December meeting of the South Downs National Park Authority, DJ has been allocated a slot to update members about SDLAF.

11. Date of next meeting

Friday 10th April, 10:30-12:30 (with lunch to follow)