

Unconfirmed minutes – to be confirmed at the next meeting of the Committee

**SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
POLICY & PROGRAMME COMMITTEE MEETING 1 MARCH 2016**

Held at the Memorial Hall, South Downs Centre, Midhurst at 2.05pm

Present:

Ken Bodfish (Chair)	Jo Carr	Mark Dunn
Philip Ede	Daniel Humphreys	Barry Lipscomb (Deputy Chair)
Sue Saville	Pete West	

Guest SDNPA Members:

Sebastian Anstruther	Gill Mattock	Karen Roberts	Jim Sheppard
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SDNPA Officers: Trevor Beattie (Chief Executive), Andrew Lee (Director of Strategy & Partnerships), Phil Belden (Director of Operations), Louise Read (Monitoring Officer), Nigel Manvell (Chief Finance Officer), Anne Rehill (Performance & Project Manager), Alan Brough (Business Services Manager), Andy Beattie (People & Places Manager), Angie Blowman (Sustainable Futures Manager), Conal Stewart (Sustainable Tourism Officer), Ruth James (Communications & Engagement Manager), Robin Parr (Governance & Support Services Manager), Stella New (Member Services Support Officer).

OPENING REMARKS

101. The Chair welcomed guest SDNPA Members Sebastian Anstruther, Gill Mattock, Karen Roberts and Jim Sheppard.

- This was in line with Standing Order 8.6, which states that a Member 'shall have the right to attend any meeting of a committee of which he/she is not a member'.

ITEM 1: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

102. Apologies were received from Deborah Urquhart and ex officio members Margaret Paren and Norman Dingemans.

ITEM 2: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

103. There were none.

ITEM 3: MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 13 OCTOBER 2015

104. With the amendment of:

- Minute 100 to delete the word '*pending*' and replace with '*subject to*'

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

ITEM 4: MATTERS ARISING

105. The Governance & Support Services Manager informed the Committee with regard to Minute 89 IT Strategy, that work was underway to identify solutions to support the improved use of technology by Members, including tablet devices to promote a more sustainable paperless working approach. It would be helpful at this stage to engage a small group of Members to ensure Members' views informed this work.

- Committee Members Jo Carr and Barry Lipscomb, and SDNPA Member Gill Mattock agreed to work with officers in the development of proposals.

106. The Director of Operations updated the Committee with regard to Minute 93 Area Offices:

- Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC) had approved in principle a sale of assets that would help finance the necessary building restoration in Stanmer Park. Officers were continuing to work with BHCC with regard to Stanmer Park as a National Park Gateway, the use of the Shared Identity and SDNPA area office requirements.
- Discussions were underway with Hampshire County Council, the New Forest National Park and the Forestry Commission with regard to submitting an Expression of Interest for a Growth Deal Bid to the EM3 Local Enterprise Partnership for the regeneration of the Queen Elizabeth Country Park and Lepe Country Park.

ITEM 5: UPDATES ON PREVIOUS COMMITTEE DECISIONS

107. The Chief Executive Officer updated the Committee with regard to Hampshire Devolution, that had been the subject of discussion at the 2 February 2016 meeting of the Full Authority

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ITEM 6: URGENT MATTERS

108. There were none.

ITEM 7: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

109. There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

ITEM 8: NEED FOR PART II EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

110. The Monitoring Officer clarified that Item 14 had been proposed for exclusion on the basis of Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as it contained information relating to the business affairs of a third party which was not yet publicly available, and which could change prior to publication.

111. It was proposed to exclude the Press and Public during item 14 on the basis that it was likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if a member of the public were present during the item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information relating to the financial and business affairs of individuals, companies and other organisations and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exempt information outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, for the reasons set out in the Report. Following a vote the proposal was carried.

112. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee would move into Part II for agenda item 14 and exclude any members of the public and press from the meeting at that time

113. As there were no members of the public present, the Chair informed the Committee that Item 14 would be considered first, and the Committee moved into Part II.

ITEM 14: A27 CHICHESTER – IMPACTS ON SPECIAL QUALITIES

114. The Committee considered the report by the People and Places Manager (Report PP5/16), in private session.

125. **RESOLVED:** that the Committee endorsed the development of a response for consideration by the Authority at the 24 March 2016 meeting that:

- 1) Having considered all the options, opposes each of the northern routes (4 & 5) on the basis of irreversible and unacceptable impacts upon the Statutory Purposes and Duty, and Special Qualities of the South Downs National Park, as a national designation of the highest order;
- 2) Notes that if improvements are considered essential, that the on-line southern routes (1, 2, 2a & 3) could meet Highways England's key aims with fewer negative impacts on the National Park.

The final wording of which is delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Policy & Programme Committee Chair and Deputy Chair.

126. SDNPA Member Sebastian Anstruther, Karen Roberts and Jim Sheppard left the Committee room at 3.10pm.

ITEM 9: FORWARD BUSINESS FOR 2016/17

127. The Committee received a verbal update from the Director of Strategy & Partnerships:

128. In response to Member queries, the Director of Strategy & Partnerships clarified that Sustainable Transport is one of the topics on the forward business list for future all Member Strategic Sessions.

ITEM 10: SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY CORPORATE PLAN 2016-2021

129. The Committee considered the report by the Performance and Project Manager (Report PPI/16).

130. In response to Member queries, officers clarified:

- As full a summary as possible of the draft Corporate Plan had been provided at this point.

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- Due to the restructure, new teams would not have been in place long enough to meet the July P&P Committee report deadlines.
- The need to ensure all aspects of the Corporate Plan were fully owned by the new teams before it was brought back before Members.
- The need to develop a long term strategic approach to sustainable transport had been identified by the Member Task and Finish Group, and following development this and strategies for other areas of work would brought back to the Committee at the correct time scheduled over the next couple of years.

131. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee:

- 1) Endorsed the Draft 5 Year Corporate Plan 2016-2021 for submission to the NPA for approval in September 2016
- 2) Delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Policy & Programme Committee, the authority to make any changes as he considers appropriate prior to submission following the implementation of the new organisational structure.

ITEM 11: BUDGET 2016/17 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

132. The Committee considered the report by the Chief Finance Officer (Report PP2/16), and received [a presentation from the Business Services Manager](#).

133. The Committee commented:

- Their thanks to the Business Service Manager for a useful presentation clearly indicating the amended figures.
- Their reservations as to the robustness of the 4 year grant protection given the forthcoming budget, and the importance of guarding against potential future reductions.
- The 5% reserves were in line with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) recommendations.
- The Authority had previously agreed that an adequate Planning Reserve was necessary in order to make planning decisions that were the best interests of the National Park rather than based on risk of appeal costs.
- Their preference to invest to save in order to secure revenue for the future.
- The need to allocate funding that could be deployed in the exploration of Income Generation revenue streams.

134. In response to questions, the Chief Executive Officer clarified:

- National Parks had received a pledge of a 4 year grant protection, however an emphasis on efficiency remains prudent.
- The new staffing structure required some investment to implement.
- It could be sensible to increase the Planning Reserve.
- The change in funding meant that the Authority could work more proactively, further developing its impact and reputation, and capitalising on funding opportunities as these arose by developing a stock of 'shovel-ready' projects.

135. **RESOLVED** That the Committee:

- 1) Recommended to the Authority to approve:
 - The 2016/17 Revenue Budget as detailed in Appendices 1, 2 & 3 of Report PP2/16.
 - The use of Revenue Reserves as set out in Section 4 of Report PP2/16.
- 2) Noted the Medium Term Financial Strategy and resource projections.

136. The Chair adjourned the meeting at 3.50pm

137. The Chair reconvened the meeting at 3.55pm

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ITEM 12: TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY STATEMENT AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2016/17

138. The Committee considered the report by the Chief Finance Officer (Report PP3/16), and commented:
- Consideration could be given to how the investment of pension funds could better support the National Park's Purposes.
 - The West Sussex Pension Fund was substantial, and already invested in local schemes including rental housing.
 - Whether SDNPA Member representation could be sought on the West Sussex Pension Fund.
 - The need for the impact and efficacy of any investments to be reported to Members.
139. In response to questions, officers clarified:
- The Treasury Management and Investment Strategy was managed in accordance with CIPFA best practice, and any changes in Government policy were reflected in the guidance.
 - Pension Authorities tended to have large funds for which it was appropriate to have a mixed portfolio with a range of risk levels.
 - The SDNPA's £5m pension portfolio was relatively small and could only balance a low level of risk.
 - The Committee's concerns raised regarding investment would be considered and included in a future report to the Committee.
140. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee recommended to the Authority to approve:
- 1) The Treasury Management Policy Statement 2016/17 and the Treasury Management Practices 2016/17 as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 to Report PP3/16
 - 2) The Annual Investment Strategy 2016/17, including the ethical investment statement and benchmark risk factor of 0.05%, as set out in Appendix 3 to Report PP3/16.

ITEM 13: SUSTAINABLE TOURISM STRATEGY

141. The Committee considered the report by the Sustainable Tourism Officer (PP4/16), and commented:
- This was a good piece of work and an important issue for the National Park
 - The welcome inclusion of elements including historical interest, the rural economy, and gateway sites.
 - The need to include cycling as an important mode of access for visitors.
 - The lack of available budget tourist accommodation such as basic campsites, and whether information could be included as to how these could be set up in line with planning policy in the National Park.
 - A view that the strategy could more clearly demonstrate the appeal of the National Park to all sections of the market.
 - Whether a section on the issue of "green-laning" / use of 4x4s could be included.
 - The need to include clear objectives, and an executive summary explaining the purpose of the document.
 - The tone of the document at times seemed to imply that tourism was a problem requiring management rather than promotion.
 - Whilst sustainability was important, demographics would likely indicate that many visitors were car users by necessity.
 - The need to reference the benefits of tourism and the National Park's Purpose 2.
 - Enjoyment of the SDNP by the public was integral to the National Park's Purpose 2.
142. Committee member Philip Ede left the meeting room at 4.30pm.

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143. In response to Member queries, officers clarified:

- The National Park's Purpose 2 related to enabling visitors to understand and enjoy the area, and it was not a requirement for the SDNPA to manage existing tourist numbers.
- The aspiration to inspire visitors with a greater understanding of the wider purposes of the National Park, and encourage behavioural changes where these were relevant.
- A Shared Identity package was being developed that would include templates for villages and businesses, guidelines on setting up campsites.
- Access providers and businesses that were members of the Food & Drink Portal were being identified to provide case studies that would support a wider take-up of the Shared Identity.

144. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee:

- 1) Noted the feedback from the partner consultation on the draft Sustainable Tourism Strategy.
- 2) Endorsed the Sustainable Tourism Strategy and subject to comments made, recommend to the Full Authority for approval.
- 3) Noted the next step to develop a framework of both existing and potential projects in discussion with partners.

CHAIR

The meeting closed at 4.38pm.

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